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BEETHOVEN SHOCK

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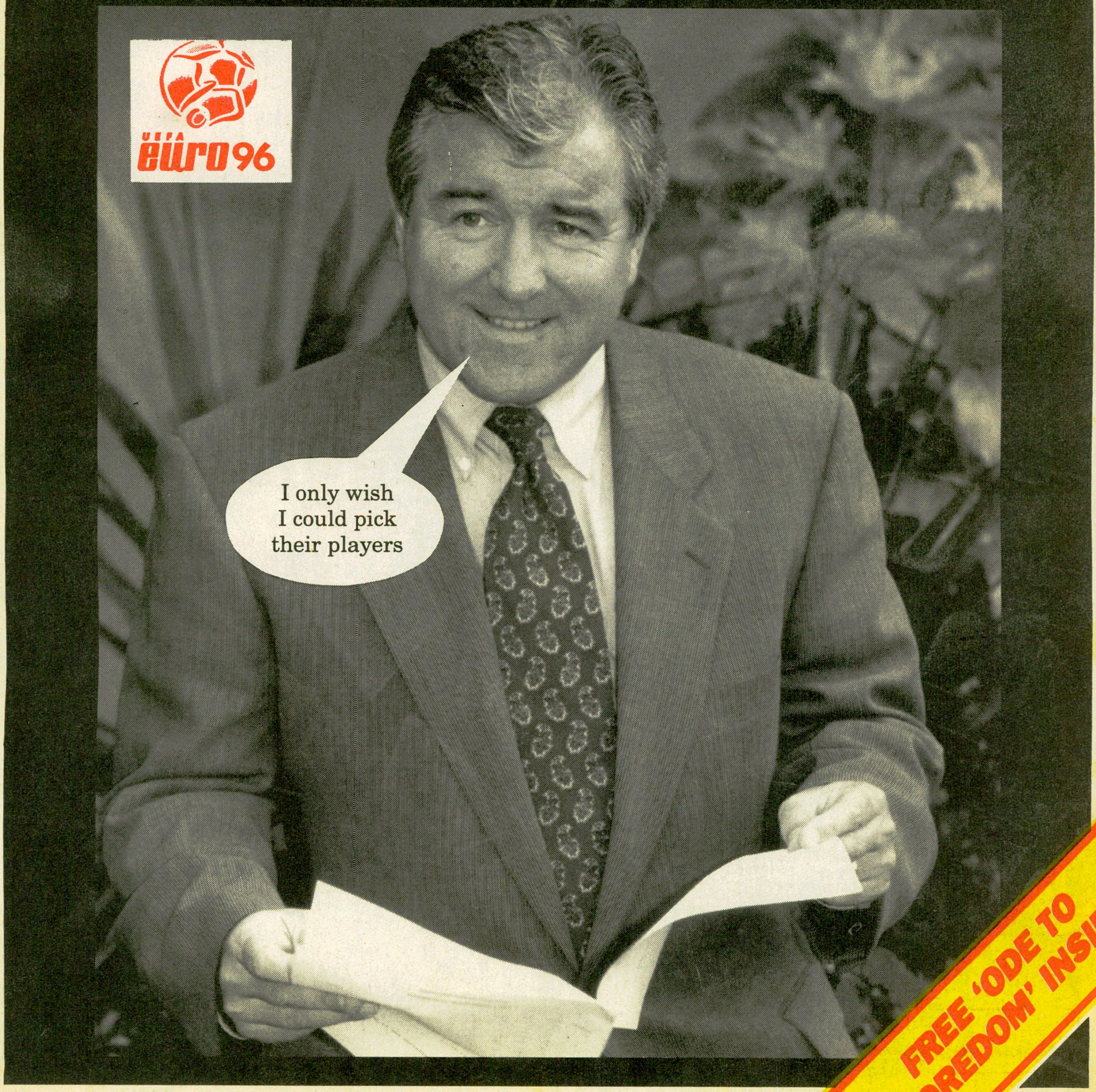

FREE 'ODE TO BOREDOM' INSIDE

"A TERRIFIC TWISTED COMEDY...A DAZZLING MIX OF MIRTH AND MALICE"

PETER TRAVERS - ROLLING STONE

A FILM BY JOEL AND ETHAN COEN

FARGO 18

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BIG CRIME
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CANNES FILM
FESTIVAL 1996

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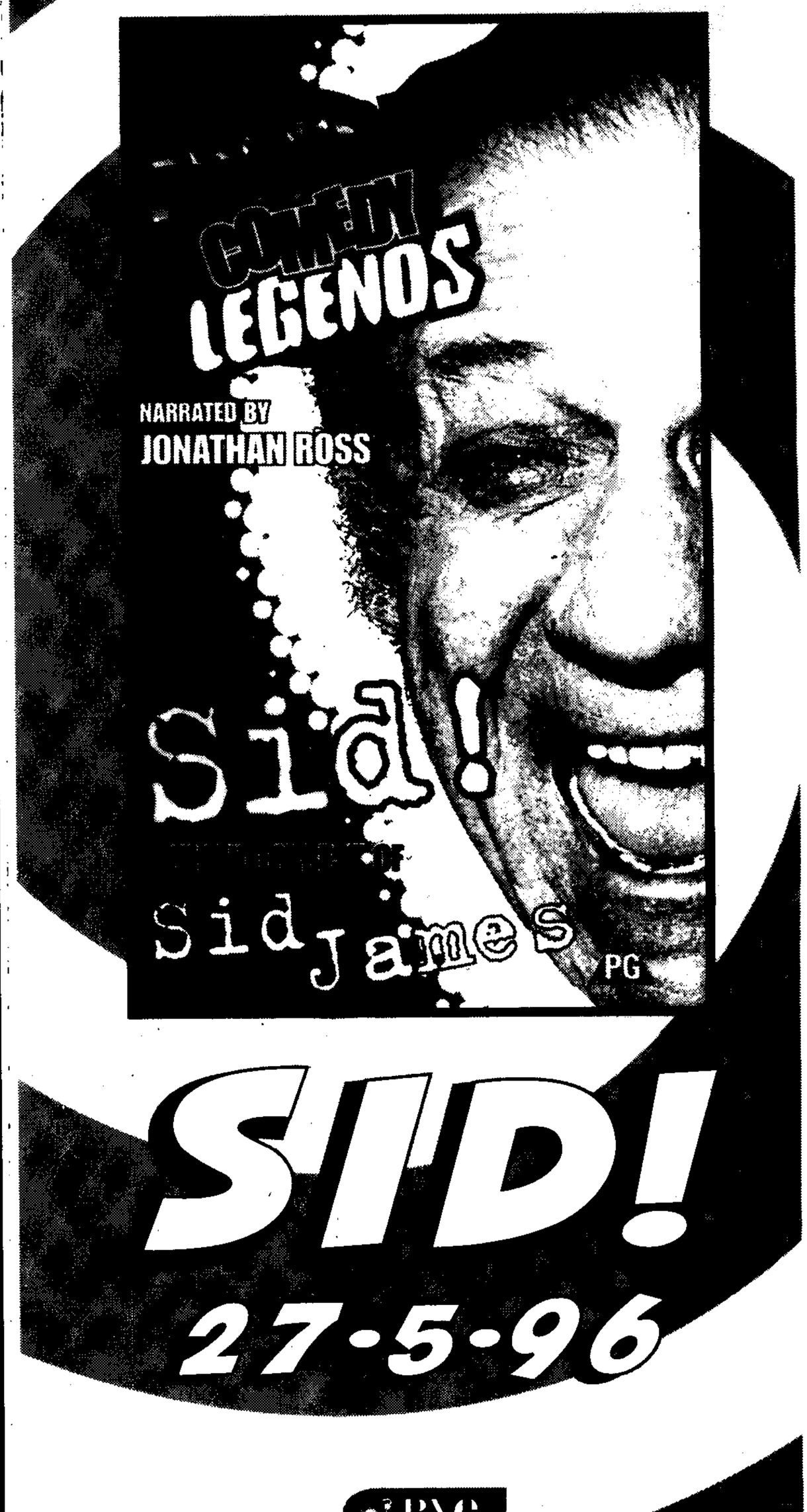

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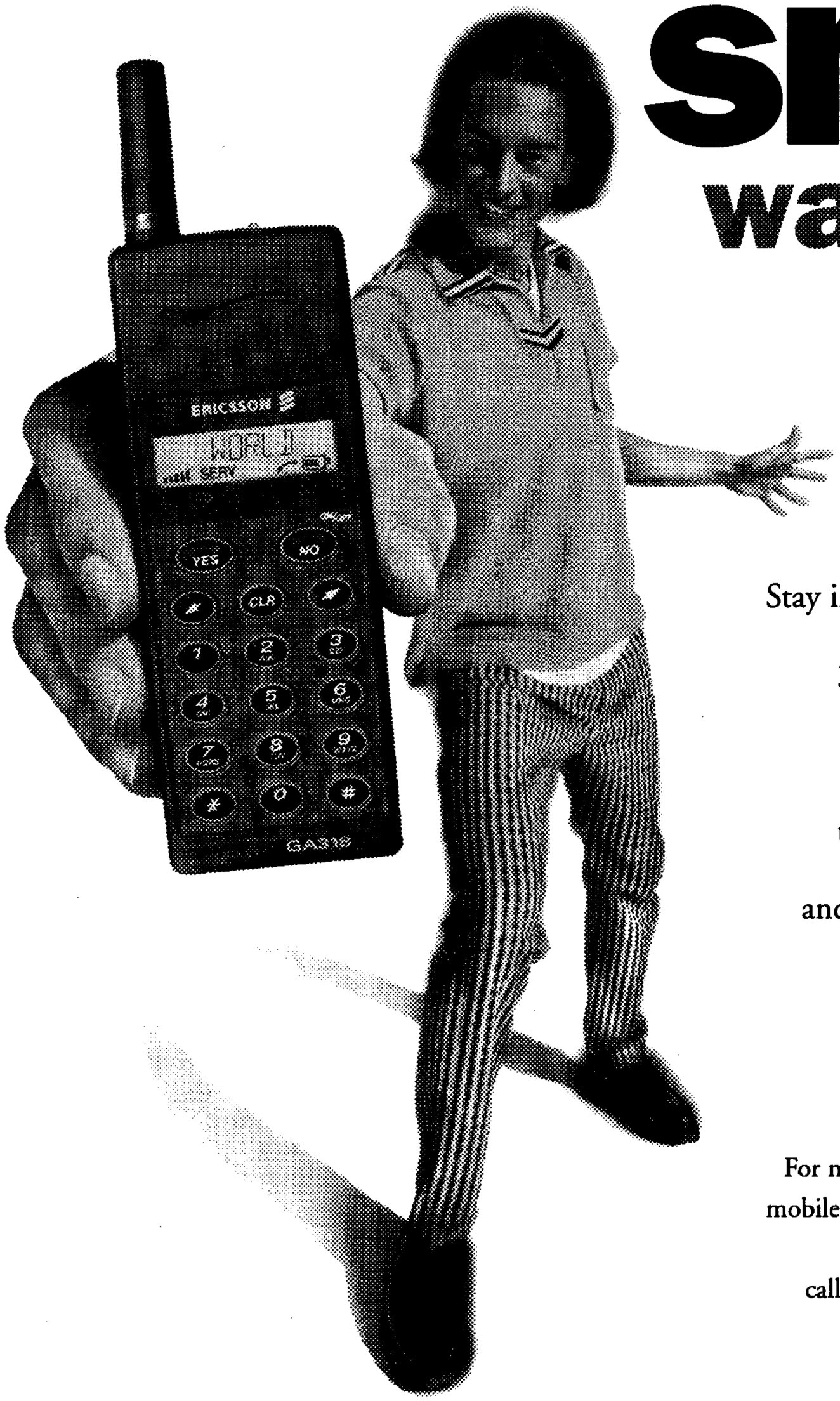

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Your sense of humour could be permanently affected

BBC

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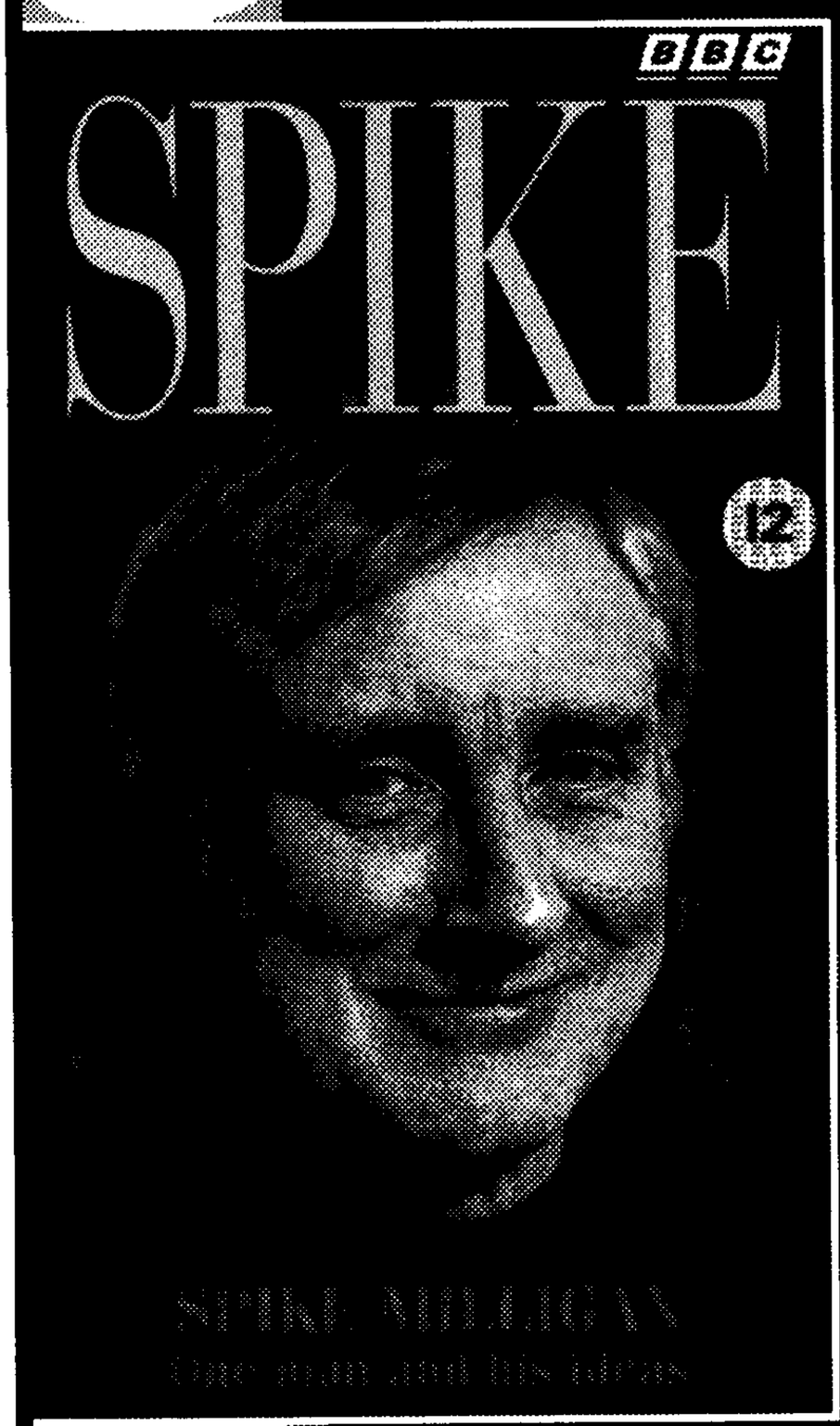

SPIKE MILLIGAN

It's Still Infectious

Out Now on

BBC VIDEO

Ye olde brewery spring.

There's probably one somewhere around the Fuggles Brewery. But nobody's found it yet.

Fuggles

A Brand NEW Old Fashioned Ale

5.5% BY VOLUME

EASY DRINKING

WITH NEW BOTTLE WIDGET

Gnome

A statement on behalf of Lord Gnomovzic, the highly-respected Serbian businessman, from his lawyers Messrs Sue, Grabbit and Carter-Runne.

MY client, Lord Gnomovzic, has had to endure a number of exceedingly ugly rumours circulating in the past few weeks. He would like to make it clear that he will not tolerate any further publication of these malicious falsehoods and will take immediate legal action against anyone foolish enough so to do.

The facts of the matter are these:

- Lord Gnomovzic *is* a very wealthy Yugoslav entrepreneur who has made a lot of money during the war.
- Lord Gnomovzic *is* a keen supporter of the internationally disgraced Bosnian Serbs.
- Lord Gnomovzic *is* a personal friend of Radovan Karadzic and many other international war criminals found guilty of acts against humanity.
- Lord Gnomovzic is *not* however a contributor to Conservative party funds and has no links with the British Tories. To suggest that he would aid and abet such people is an appalling libel and one which will be firmly resisted. You have been warned.

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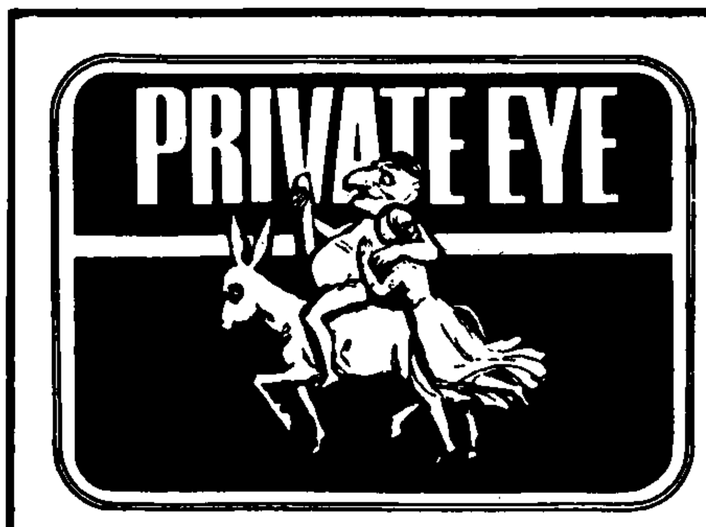

COLOUR SECTION

IN HIS closing address on behalf of Owen Oyston at Liverpool crown court last week, Anthony Scrivener QC warned the jury that the defendant's morality was not on trial. "If that was the case, then we would have lost hands down already."

Quite so: Oyston is undoubtedly a bully and a philanderer *(what about "slimy creep", "shady sleazeball" and "unwise attempted purchaser of Private Eye shares"? Ed)*. But is he a rapist? Yes, according to the jury. However, the verdict was not quite the unqualified victory for which the Greater Manchester police had been hoping.

He was originally charged with rape or indecent assault against no fewer than six young "models". Three of the cases were dismissed at the committal hearing, when magistrates ruled that there was no case to answer. Two of the other cases, involving "Miss A" and "Miss C", went to trial but ended in acquittal. It was only thanks to the tear-jerking evidence of "Miss B" that Inspector Knacker managed to get Oyston sent to prison.

In the trial which ended last week, the jury cleared Oyston on the charges concerning "Miss A" but convicted him of raping "Miss B". But although the verdicts were different, there were some striking similarities between the two cases. Both women had worked for the "Model Team" agency in Manchester; neither of them could remember the date of the alleged rape; neither reported the offence at the time, or for years afterwards; when first contacted by the police, neither woman made any complaint against Oyston; both women allegedly made the allegation of rape only after the police had begun to interview them. Oh, and neither woman was supported by any other evidence.

Miss B alleged that she was raped at Oyston's house in the presence of a witness, Lisa Rubotham. Rubotham was interviewed by the police 24 times after the allegation, but only once was she asked whether she had witnessed any impropriety involving Owen Oyston and Miss B. She said she had witnessed nothing of the sort — whereupon the interviewing officer, DC Martyn Hughes, told her that there was no need for her to make a statement.

This seems, to say the least, rather surprising. More surprisingly still, when Oyston was questioned after his arrest he was led to believe that Rubotham had indeed confirmed Miss B's story. Here is the relevant part of the interview:

Oyston: "So what was Lisa doing while I was making love to the girl against her will? What was Lisa doing? She was there observing it?"

DC Hughes: "She was there in bed."

Oyston: "Does Lisa say that?"

DC Hughes: "Lisa says that, yes."

Oyston: "What? Against her will?"

DC Hughes: "Let me just say that Lisa and Girl B did not consent to have sex with you. Neither of them did."

As Anthony Scrivener QC informed the jury, this was untrue. During the trial he asked DC Hughes: "So there was no statement in your possession from Lisa where she said that?" Hughes answered: "No." When Rubotham herself appeared as witness, she confirmed that she had never seen Oyston raping Miss B. Nevertheless, the jury found him guilty.

His conviction will have brought enormous satisfaction to several people in high places — and especially to the former minister Robert Atkins MP, the Tory peer Lord Blaker and the Lancashire tycoon Bill Harrison. As the *Eye* revealed five years ago, this distinguished trio spent years searching for dirt on Oyston with the assistance of Michael Murrin, a former fish-and-chip shop owner turned private investigator. Unbeknown to them, Murrin was secretly recording most of their telephone conversations.

Money was apparently no object, as Lord Blaker confirmed during one of his chats with Murrin:

Blaker: "There are funds still available."

Murrin: "Oh yes?"

Blaker: "I don't know whether Robert [Atkins] talked to you about the quantity of funds talked about."

Murrin: "No; he didn't."

Blaker: "Well, we've got up to ten thousand."

This was an underestimate: Harrison eventually spent about £50,000 pursuing his vendetta against the "socialist millionaire". The aim was simple: Get Oyston. Here, for instance, is a conversation between Murrin and Robert Atkins, then a government minister and one of John Major's closest friends:

Murrin: "I've gone into a lot of detail on Oyston."

Atkins: "I have, between you and me, I have talked to my colleague at the DTI who is responsible for the City."

Murrin: "Yes."

Atkins: "And, er, he is prepared at this stage, if there is any real evidence, to put the boys in."

Murrin eagerly pursued all sorts of bizarre and far-fetched rumours connecting Oyston with drug-smuggling, tax evasion, money-laundering, child pornography and blackmail. After listening to an outrageous claim by Murrin that he was trying to tie in Oyston with the sexual abuse of children, Lord Blaker commented: "Well, really. Well, things are shaping up then."

Blaker's enthusiasm is even more apparent in another of the tape-recorded phone calls, when Murrin warns that Oyston might "try to do a runner" if things get too hot:

Blaker: "Yes, well, that will be a victory of sorts, but not such a good one as the one we want. Not the one we want."

Murrin: "No, we want him here. We don't want him to do a Biggs."

Blaker: "Behind bars, that's right, absolutely."

Now, as Oyston begins a six-year stretch, Lord Blaker and his chums have at last got what they wanted.

- ***Foot on Lady Porter, Tim Bell and Jonathan Aitken*** 26
- ***Slicker on Archer*** 28
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- ***In The Tearoom with "Mandy"*** 8
- ***George Walden's Literary Plot*** 25
- ***Paula's Hackwatch*** 11
- ***Hallo! Goes Serb*** 8
- ***Euro '96 — The Hacks*** 6

Street Of Shame

WHEN the Magill report on Shirley Porter's antics at Westminster city council was published, the London *Evening Standard* was positively incandescent with outrage.

"The truth of what she has done really is inescapable, and the arrogance and cynicism of it is breathtaking," the paper thundered. "One can only wonder at the triumphalist, Thatcherite culture of government — both local and national — which allowed this kind of amoral opportunism to flourish."

True enough. But what about the triumphalist, Thatcherite culture of Fleet Street, which lionised Shirley Porter when it should have been investigating her? Here, for instance, is a letter she sent to a newspaper editor in May 1989: "Dear John, Thank you for a splendid lunch last Monday. I always enjoy your company and the latest occasion was no exception. I had a very relaxed Policy and Resources Committee meeting as a result.

"Thanks also for your support in recent months. I am particularly glad that you share our outrage at the government's proposals for the Community Charge in Westminster and the daft notion that our ratepayers should have to contribute £75 a head to outer London boroughs... I have asked for some papers about this problem to be put together to be sent to you and would very much appreciate your support in this matter."

The recipient of this fond *billet doux* was John Leese, the then editor of... the *Evening Standard*!

WHILE vigorously supporting home secretary Michael Howard's policy on minimum sentences the *Sun* has been boasting of its own fine record on law and order.

Deputy editor Neil "Wolfman" Wallis was recently given a standing ovation by delegates at the Police Federation conference in Scarborough for his alleged contribution to the fight against crime. And last week, at the police bravery awards ceremony in London, editor Stuart Higgins was loudly applauded by the boys in blue. Perhaps, though, they should reflect on the *Sun*'s relationship with soccer thug Matthew Simmons who, immediately after being felled by Eric Cantona's kung-fu kick, fell into the arms of two *Sun* reporters clutching a generous cheque. Both Simmons and the *Sun* forgot to mention their exclusive arrangement (which turned out to be a poor buy, given that most of the paper's readers sided with Cantona) during the recent trial, which ended with the prosecuting counsel being nutted.

Presumably Messrs Wallis and Higgins, the two Policemen's Pets, will now be especially careful to ensure that the *Sun* never again allows criminals to profit from their offences.

THE fame of folksy American travel writer Bill Bryson, author of *The Lost Continent*, is growing — but perhaps not in the way Bryson would like.

A recent article in the pisspoor *Daily Express* about an American small town boy who heads for Peterborough to find true love had a very familiar ring to it.

Hacks Ashley Walton and Nic Fleming began their piece: "Nick Heisdorffer comes from Harper, Iowa. Someone has to." Bryson's book begins: "I come from Des Moines. Somebody had to." He continues: "You either accept the fact without question... or you spend your adolescence moaning at length about what a dump it is and how you can't wait to get out."

Or as the *Daily Depress* put it: "You either accept it without question and exist as a dirt-poor worker — or you spend your adolescence moaning about what a dump it is and how you can't wait to get out."

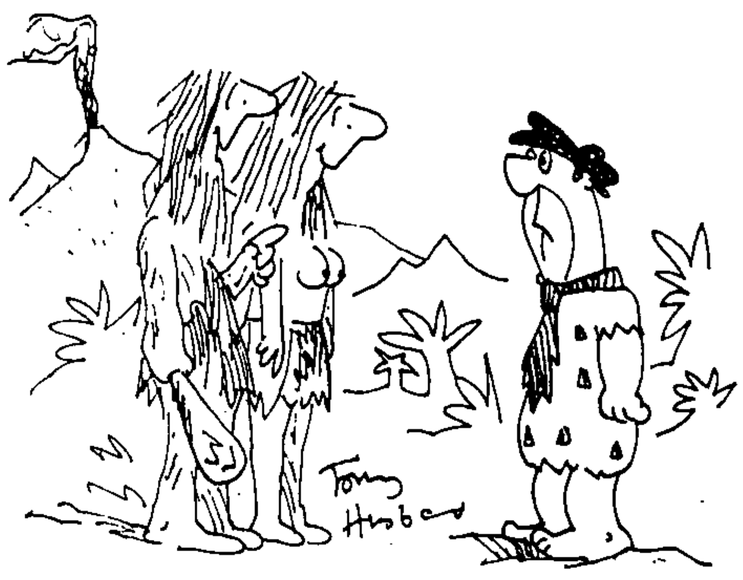
Both Bryson's Des Moines and the *Express*'s Harper are "hypnotic" and the people in both places are "strangely serene". Obviously the *Express* hacks credited Bryson for their lengthy borrowings? No.

THE *Independent*'s pisspoor Weekend section tried a bit of "glamour" recently with an article on Cannes which concentrated on the saucy, porn side of the festival. This was extremely familiar to readers of the relentlessly laddish mag, *Loaded*.

At Cannes last year, *Loaded*'s Jon Ronson attended a similarly raunchy event where he saw journalists given a "brown paper doggy bag" full of "hard core filth". Funnily enough the *Indie*'s Dickie Fantastic was this year also given a "brown paper doggy bag" full of "hardcore filth".

The *Loaded* hack watched with amusement as a bag "splits open" spilling the rude contents in front of "elderly tuxed couples on their way to the screening of the Yugoslav film about the horrors of the Bosnian war". Incredibly, one year on this event repeats itself exactly. The *Indie* hack sees a paper bag break in front of "VIP French cineastes in bow-ties" going to see the "screening of a Yugoslav film about the horrors of the Bosnian war".

And so on, word for miserable word. *Loaded*'s intro noted that "porn people are grouchy and defensive"; while the *Notveryindependent* found porn people, er, "grouchy and defensive".



" 'scuse me - aren't you on television?"

IN A pugnacious editorial last week, the *Financial Times* criticised American management guru Stephen Roach for recanting on his support for "downsizing". "Mr Roach's efficiency argument against downsizing seems entirely misplaced," the paper concluded, arguing that companies which want "healthier growth" should continue with mass sackings and interminable cost-cutting.

The *FT*'s editor, Richard "Safe Hands" Lambert, certainly practises what he preaches: thanks to his ineptly-managed job cuts and spurious "reorganisation" of the newspaper, hacks at the *FT* have voted in favour of industrial action. They are threatening to boycott the *FT*'s highly lucrative Surveys programme as the best way of showing their displeasure — and denting the profits of Pearson, the *FT*'s complacent owner.

Meanwhile Lambert has just suffered the indignity of seeing one of his own pet projects — a long-planned *FT* Survey of Britain — being canned since no-one wanted to advertise in it. Lambert insisted it should still go ahead — at which point thrusting, teetotal chief executive Stephen "Slasher" Hill (a former spear-carrier for Ernest Saunders and for some reason known to *FT* staff as "Ethel") stepped in and refused to permit such an appalling waste of money.

The aborted fiasco nevertheless cost the company thousands of pounds at a time when belts are supposedly being tightened. Given all this, can it be long before Lambert is "downsized" himself?

VARIOUS Fleet Street luminaries who gathered in Washington recently for an international newspaper conference were intrigued by the conspicuous absence of Mirror Group chief executive David "Rommel" Montgomery, who had been scheduled to deliver an address on the heady theme of "Vision for a Wider Media Base".

They were even more intrigued to learn that Rommel had pulled out at the last minute pleading that he had cancelled all appointments for five weeks. Opinion was divided as to whether "Rommel" was busy planning a major business deal or whether he was taking time off to prepare for an impending event in his personal life — a subject he has employed solicitors to warn other newspapers against discussing.

THE victory of Sarah Rolls, an advertising promotions manager, over her former employer IPC, the biggest women's magazine publishing group in the country, was hailed by the equal opportunities commission (EOC) as a breakthrough for women at work who want to have children.

Soon after she had her second child, Sarah Rolls asked IPC if she could share her job with another equally qualified fellow-worker. The job share wouldn't have cost IPC a penny, but it steadfastly refused to consider it. Sarah Rolls left her job last September, and, backed by the EOC, took IPC to a tribunal for sex discrimination.

In April, at the door of the court, she won a package worth £35,000 and a pledge from IPC to be fair about job shares in future. One reason IPC settled out of court may have been its anxiety to avoid publicity for an excellent article in the general interest magazine *Essentials*, published in March last year just as Sarah Rolls was asking for her jobshare.

This two-page "special report" entitled HELP! I WANT TO GO PART-TIME, outlined the numerous advantages for women and employers of job sharing. For women the decision to job share "could be one of the most rewarding phases of your life"; and for employers "initial inconvenience is soon outweighed by higher productivity, lower absenteeism and improved flexibility". Nevertheless, the article revealed, some employers remained obstinate and were "even being hauled before industrial tribunals".

Essentials, needless to say, is published at a good profit by IPC.

FOOTBALL NEWS

WHEN the Press Association's respected football correspondent Rob King wired a report on the England-China game back to London and his story flashed up on screens in newspaper offices around the country, editors read his words with growing alarm.

"England had to work hard to find chinks in the home defence..." he had disarmingly written.

Equally impressive was Andrew Longmore of the *Times*, whose report on the England game in Hong Kong began thus: "The Hong Kong Golden Select XI wore a fetching flamingo-coloured strip for their big day, but, by the end of a dismal afternoon in the national stadium here yesterday, the faces of the England team had turned a brighter shade of pink. But for a goal by Les Ferdinand just before half-time..."

If even Les Ferdinand's face turned bright pink, this was indeed newsworthy: like his England team-mates Sol Campbell and Paul Ince, he is black.

THE oafish Mike Parry, executive editor of the Press Association news agency, has met his match at last. The "Bearded One", who has made life hell for PA journos since editor Paul Potts hired him six months ago, has two great weaknesses: football and arguing the toss, usually when he is tired and emotional.

After the recent football writers' annual dinner in London, at which Eric Cantona collected his Player of the Year award, Parry was drunkenly bragging about how many people he had sacked at the PA since his arrival. Eventually *Sunday Times* sportswriter Joe Lovejoy could bear no more and started arguing back.

Parry invited him to "settle it outside" — which they duly did. But it didn't last long: within seconds, Parry was flat on his back nursing a bloody lip. Almost in tears he demanded the instant presence of Inspector Knacker, only to be reminded that he was the one who had asked for the fight.

Before arriving at the Press Association, ironically enough, Parry was chief spokesman for the Football Association — in which capacity he often demanded crackdowns on hooliganism. But his own disciplinary record is none too impressive. Before the recent incident when he was news editor of the *Daily Express*, he was detained by the Italian police after a tired and emotional fracas with another sportswriter in Sardinia during the 1990 world cup. The *carabinieri* also confiscated his passport, which was returned only after a plea to the foreign office from the *Daily Express*'s deputy editor Paul Potts — the old chum who has now recruited Parry to the Press Association.

THE HALLO! HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! OUR appallingly unpatriotic Captains of Industry have apparently sunk the hope of a privately-funded replacement for Brenda's ageing yacht, *Britannia*.

This idea was kicked off last year by the social-climbing Sir Nigel Gosling, grotesquely rich founder of the useless National Parking Corporation.

Sir Nigel (whose own vulgar gin palace, *Leander*, got humiliatingly stuck under a London bridge some years ago) kicked off the fund with a donation of £5 million. He called upon Britain's other tycoons to cough up the remaining £60 million for *Britannia II*. But, I discover, not a penny has been forthcoming!

The wheeze has been quietly dropped. This is a severe blow for Sir Nigel, who desperately hoped such royal brown-nosing would win him admittance to the Royal Yacht Squadron — from which, quite rightly, he has been resolutely blocked.

O·B·N

"The success of this auction does not belong to Sotheby's. It belongs to Mrs Onassis. It is her grace and style, her dignity, her courage, that are behind the results of this past week. People have bid and bought at this auction because she and President Kennedy have touched our lives in a profound and moving way. What we have seen over this remarkable, memorable, and even historic week, is only one further validation of Mrs Onassis' importance to people around the world. It adds to a legacy that seems to become even brighter with the passage of time and it has been the greatest privilege for Sotheby's to be linked, if only briefly, to her and to her memory."

DIANA D. BROOKS, Sotheby's

Submitted by Marc Owen. ***£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.***

HALLO! TO Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh, where Princess Anne held court all last week in her role as Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. A social jamboree!

However, one was somewhat surprised to discover that one of her personal guests at Holyrood was Professor Richard Whitfield, the megalomaniac warden of St George's House, Windsor — the unhappy religious "think tank" founded by Prince Philip.

For not only have internal reports revealed that staff regard Whitfield as "devious" and "a bully who likes to pick on one individual, mostly women", but the *Eye* recently disclosed that the wretched Whitfield was "made" to leave his senior post at Save the Children Fund.

The Princess Royal, of course, is President of Save the Children.

LUVVIES

"I think it's really bloody important to show birth like that, before pain control and epidurals, just like in all the damn agony. If Thomas Hardy were alive today, he'd be kissing Michael Winterbottom's feet."

KATE WINSLET, on Winterbottom's screen adaptation of Jude the Obscure Guardian

Submitted by Ben Pearson.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

HALLO! HOW unfair that Prince Michael of Kent's former private Secretary, John Kennedy, should be hounded for allegedly being the "go-between" for Serb donations to the Tory Party. This handsome prospective Tory MP, after all, is engaged to the lovely Princess Lavinia of Yugoslavia!

However at least one politician came to his defence in the public prints — dear old Ted Atwell, former Tory agent at Thurrock, Essex. Ted bravely called John Kennedy a "marvellous bloke" and a "real patriot".

Ted, of course, is himself a fanatical patriot. A few years ago he caused a spot of upset at his local Conservative Club in Grays, Essex, when he announced that Britain should "get rid of wogs, Jews and Irish".

Vocal objectors to Ted's views were summarily expelled, and when 44 Tory members protested — they, too, were either expelled or disciplined.

Ted, understandably, is baffled why the friendly Serbs shouldn't bung the Tories a bob or two.

HALLO! *I HAVE been hugely cheered over the beastly mad cow nonsense by reading a letter in the prestigious Evesham Journal.*

"Where are the protests from the ordinary British Public?" demands a Mrs Oina Baldry, from Fladbury, Worcs, appalled that shifty foreigners should dare lecture us on our beloved cows.

"Here in the heart of England we are all now surrounded by these gentle creatures and their calves," writes Oina, adding poignantly: "I am a Tory voter, but I feel for my own conscience's sake I must protest at what is being done to our country and urge other caring people to protest too."

A moving battle cry, from "the ordinary British Public". But perhaps Oina, of old Rectory Green, should pass on this trenchant protest to her son — Agriculture Minister Tony Baldry.

"It's tallow, gelatin and semen — I don't know what it does, but it seems to be the latest thing"

HALLO! HANDEL's *Theodora* opened to marvellous reviews at Glyndebourne recently, where one member of the audience at least must have been pleased to see the composer being performed at Glynders after a long absence — Dr Julie Anne Sadie.

As director of the Handel House museum, which has just received half a million in lottery money, Dr Sadie is an authority on Handel and was even quoted in the press recently as saying: "Handel was the greatest composer ever to live and work in Britain."

Imagine the Marquesa's surprise when she turned to greet the doctor during the performance, only to find that the doyenne of Handel was enjoying the music so much it had sent her into a deep and contemplative state which, to the untutored eye, looked very much as if she were asleep!

'The Marquesa'

MUSEUM UPDATE

TIMOTHY CLIFFORD, the director of the National Galleries of Scotland, pocketed a handy £180,000 last week with the auction of his private collection of Renaissance and Baroque medals. He had planned to sell the medals anonymously (the catalogue described them merely as "the property of a gentleman"), but following revelations in the last *Eye* he was forced to own up.

The *Eye*'s story also caught the attention of Tristram Besterman, convenor of the Museums Association's ethics committee, who intends to raise the question of Clifford's behaviour at the committee's next meeting, in mid-June. "I'd rather he hadn't done this and I'm not happy about it, but it's a grey area," Besterman told the press. "It may be that he has not breached the rules." In fact there is nothing "grey" about it (see *Eye* 898).

Clifford himself insists there is "no conflict of interest". He told the *Times* that the medals sold last week had all been bought by him before he came to Scotland. However, the ethics rules prohibit not only buying but also *selling for profit* — which he has manifestly done. As a civil servant, he is also flouting the spirit of the new Nolan rules about public service. Since the gallery's trustees are apparently happy to condone his flagrant misconduct, is it not time for Scottish secretary Michael Forsyth to intervene?

Legal News

A CLUTCH of conscience-stricken QCs from the lucrative commercial bar have announced recently that they will give up three normally very expensive days of their time to do unpaid "pro bono" work in aid of the poor and oppressed.

This has led to two problems. First, most difficult cases involving the poor and oppressed are quite complicated, and involve more than three days' study.

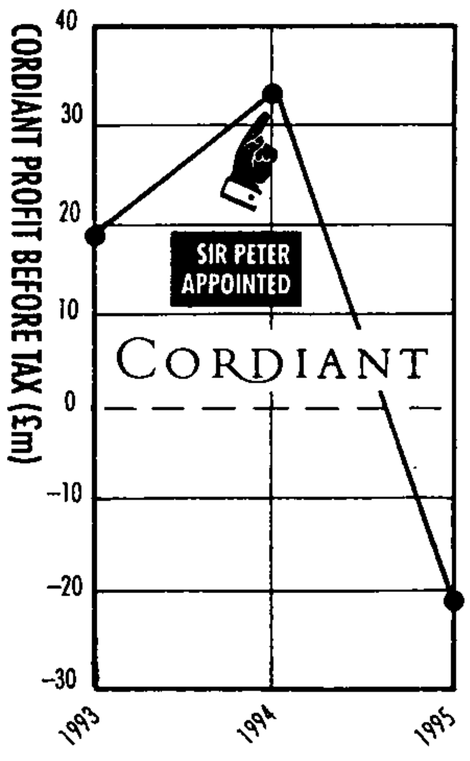
More crucially, barristers doing "pro bono" work need solicitors to do free work preparing the cases. Solicitors might not be quite so eager to come forward for such work after a recent judgment from Mr Justice Collins (who was promoted to the bench shortly before he was roundly criticised by the Scott report for non-disclosure of vital evidence to defendants he was prosecuting).

A London solicitors' firm, Shilling and Lom, agreed to take up the case of the libel action between Count Tolstoy and Lord Aldington which resulted in damages to the noble lord of £1.5 million. Tolstoy argued that new evidence had come to light which questioned the original jury's verdict and damages. His view was supported by a barrister's opinion. Tolstoy was bankrupt, so Shilling and Lom took up the case "pro bono".

Collins struck out the case at the pleadings stage as "hopeless" and ordered the solicitors to pay most of Lord Aldington's costs. The barrister of course did not have to pay a penny — but then almost all judges have been barristers. So watch out "pro bono" solicitors. Any "pro bono" case they lose might cost them tens of thousands of pounds, while "pro bono" silks will have done their bit for the poor and oppressed without risking a penny.

British Management Part 37.

SIR PETER WALTERS, Chairman SmithKline Beecham, Chairman Blue Circle Industries, Deputy Chairman Thorn EMI, Former Chairman BP and Midland Bank. Director Cordiant plc from 1994.



IN THE TEAROOM

TONY BLAIR, who last week forced his two closest confidants, Gordon Brown and Peter "Bobby" Mandelson, to kiss and make up in the interests of party unity, is mistaken if he thinks the recent fisticuffs are over. Mandelson fanned the flames of the scrap, assiduously briefing his cronies in the press gallery to make sure they "got the story right" — ie the Mandelson version of his bust up with "big" Gordon. Hacks were inveigled with tales of "focus groups", "swing voters" and "child benefit"; and true to form the *Observer* last Sunday reported that Mandelson had indeed got the upper hand.

Meanwhile as "Bobby" strengthens his grip on Millbank's new Ministry of Truth old Labour has every reason to be frightened of "Bobby" and the glittering array of young "Bobby" impersonators in the media centre. For they have a new toy — a computer system named Excalibur — which is designed to provide "rapid rebuttals" to any claims made by opponents. Its donor, Philip Jeffrey, became an early victim having been unceremoniously driven from the proprietorship of the *New Statesman*.

Last weekend Tony Benn's former lieutenant on Earth, Michael Meacher, also found himself being rapidly rebutted following his statement that Labour would banish the job seekers' allowance, a Tory device designed to claw back dole money from the unemployed. Meacher's attempts to seize the headlines proved an ignominious failure — until the leader's office, aided by the rapid rebuttal unit, heaved into action, forcing Meacher's hapless assistant Ian Wilmore to grovel to hacks and apologise for "getting the policy wrong". So Meacher's statement did manage to make front-page news after all.

'Rainsboro'

ONE of the clearest signs a Labour victory is on the way is the frantic scrabbling at the sleazier end of the parliamentary lobbying sector.

The rush by PR fat cats to employ anyone thought to have connections with Blair's "government-in-waiting" (see *Eye* 884) continues apace.

Blair hatchet girl Maureen O'Mara, the Wally Road apparatchik who advised the leader on the selection of parliamentary candidates but failed to get a seat herself, has been snaffled up by the Advocacy Partnership as an account director.

Meanwhile Stephen Twigg — former chief whip at Islington council and orchestrator of the campaign against "Lefty" Liz Davies — has abandoned his post as PA to Blair groupie and Barking and Dagenham MP Margaret Hodge. He's gone to a higher paid job with PR sleazeballs Roland Sallingbury Casey.

But the most extraordinary *volte face* has been performed by Tory lobbyists Lowe Bell. Despite being known as the provisional wing of Tory central office, Lowe Bell already employs former Gordon Brown adviser Neal Lawson and provides a base from which he can publish his pisspoor Blairite "theoretical journal", *Renewal*. Now it has pushed its tendrils further left, recruiting *Tribune* editor Mark Seddon. Whatever next? Ian Greer Associates hiring Tony Benn? Watch this space...

THE collapse after one issue of the first national lottery magazine, *Lottery*, must have been a profound disappointment to Jack Cunningham, Labour's heritage (and lottery) spokesman.

It would have been a disappointment not just because his informative article on Labour's attitude to the lottery formed such a prominent part of the doomed publication, but also because he is paid £10,000 a year as an adviser to the magazine's publisher, Centurion Press.

GAS regulator Clare Spottiswoode was chosen to run OFGAS because the government, the City and the gas industry were fed up with her predecessor. Sir James McKinnon had the annoying habit of regulating the profitable industry and frightening the investors.

There would be no such aggro with Clare, it was felt, because she had learnt at the treasury the importance of leaving the market well alone. Indeed, her job in the engineering deregulation task force was to tear up any government rule that might obstruct the business of making an honest profit.

So why has she suddenly become an arch interventionist, slashing prices and ruining the hopes of directors and shareholders? Interestingly, her apparent Damascene conversion has been mirrored by that of Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator. He was also once a true believer in the market — yet he has now come out against the two biggest generators, National Power and PowerGen, being allowed to buy two regional electricity companies; and he has even asked the public to advise him whether he should block the proposed takeover of Midlands Electricity by an American utility.

What has happened to the regulators? One theory must be quashed immediately: no one has nudged their elbows and told them an election is approaching and that they must avoid antagonising the voters. This cannot be the explanation because the regulators, who are appointed by the government, are independent. It says so in various acts of parliament.

The fact that Ian Lang, president of the board of trade, has performed similar U-turns is obviously a coincidence and should not be regarded as evidence that this is a political matter. There must be some other explanation...

THE shock waves caused by Philip Hensher, the clerk sacked from the Commons after writing a raunchy parliamentary novel about rent boys, are still echoing round Westminster tearooms.

Particularly embarrassing for head clerk Donald Limon was the revelation that for seven months Hensher had sat around on full pay writing his novel at taxpayers' expense while the clerks considered which committee he should work for.

Anxious to protect their historic privileges, senior officials demanded that Limon wield the axe. Since most of the clerks' department and Hansard enjoy as much as five months' leave a year on full salary thanks to the extended parliamentary recesses, Commons officials were keen to stifle the unwelcome publicity.

As one junior clerk commented after the Hensher debacle, the hours worked by some Commons employees "...make even the most lacklustre, part-time MP look like a workaholic".

'Backbiter'

EDUCATION NEWS

AT a recent assembly of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers union, a member of the Hertfordshire branch read out a letter from a former colleague which recalled her English teacher when she was 13.

"He taught in an issue-based manner," it read, "and orientated the curriculum around topics such as mining life, football hooliganism, shoplifting, abortion, and the pill. My mother regarded this as a process of corruption while I saw it as a vain attempt on the part of the teacher to be trendy."

Just the sort of thing Her Majesty's chief inspector of schools, Chris Woodhead, would despise as a supporter of back to basics schooling and as the scourge of poor British teaching standards.

Perhaps this "trendy" teacher should be reported to Woodhead? Er, as the letter continued: "I was amazed to find that this teacher is now head of Ofsted, chastising teachers for low expectations, lack of knowledge and 'progressive methods'."

This revelation of Woodhead's past sparked off some debate in the union and another teacher wrote recounting his days alongside the once "trendy operator". The teacher recalled that he had even argued with Woodhead "over what he considered my over-didactic approach and concern for basics". When he wrote to Woodhead asking him about his somewhat altered approach he replied his "thinking had moved on" since those days.

WATER WORLD

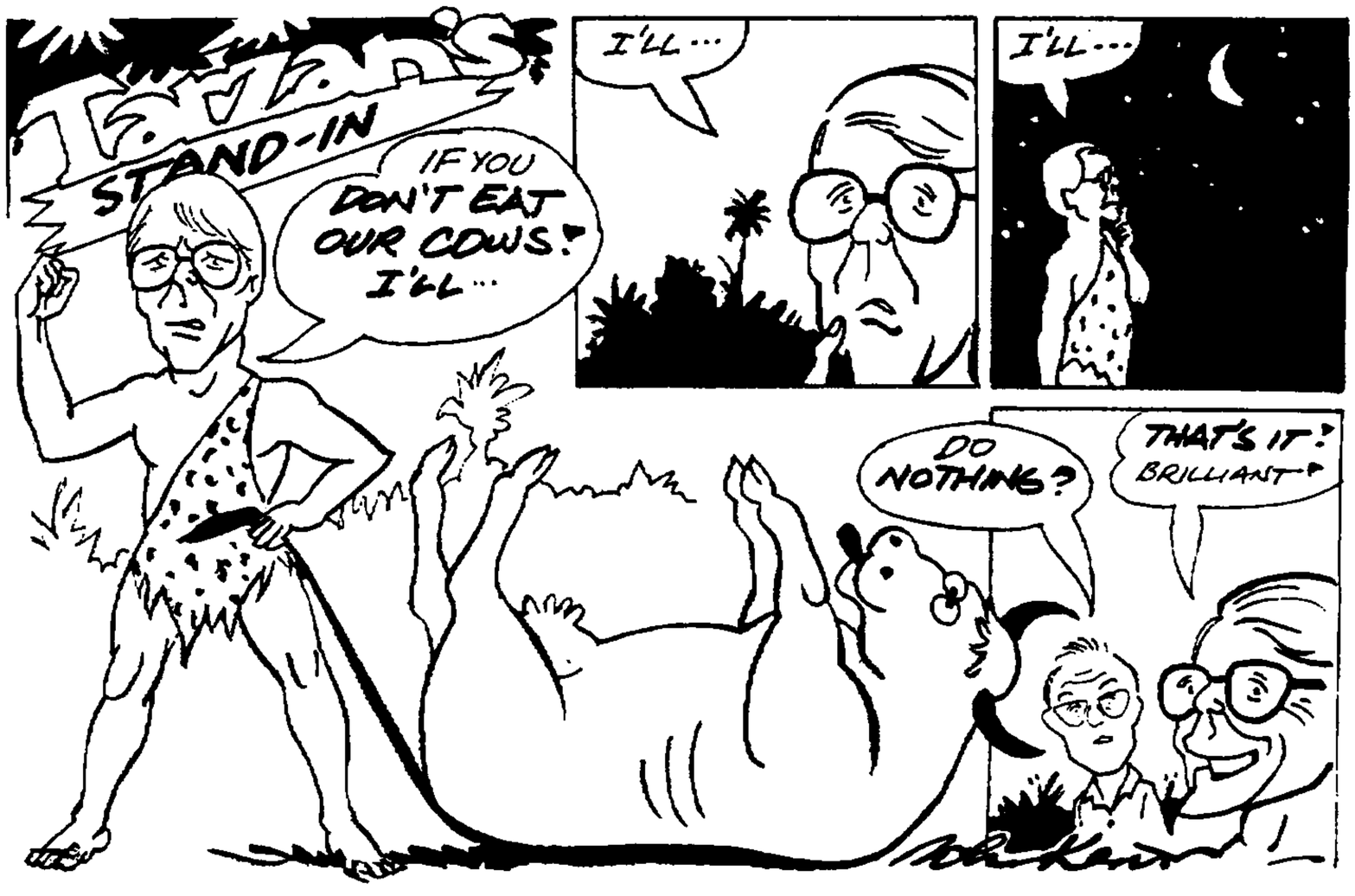
FOR A few nasty moments earlier in May the people of Grimsby thought the unthinkable — that their water supply had been transferred from Anglian Water to the hopeless Yorkshire Water.

Yorkshire Water posters appeared throughout the east coast town, informing residents that "a hosepipe ban covers this area". It turned out that the siting of the posters was yet another cock-up by the gaffe-prone Yorkshire Water, which does not supply Grimsby — where there is no hosepipe ban.

Meanwhile Yorkshire has taken on a new cut-price chairman to replace the beleaguered Sir Gordon Jones, who was paid £189,000 a year, plus perks. New chairman Brandon Gough has magnanimously accepted just £120,000.

Asked why he was prepared to take a cut of nearly £70,000, Gough explained that the Yorkshire post would not actually be his full-time job. He still holds ten other posts, five of which are paid, and will squeeze the Yorkshire job into two days a week at most.

Gough lives in a manor house in Kent.



NOOKS and CORNERS

I ILLUSTRATE a work of self-evident genius — a "geometric spiral", both solid and glazed, to upset tired, conventional notions of what architecture is about.

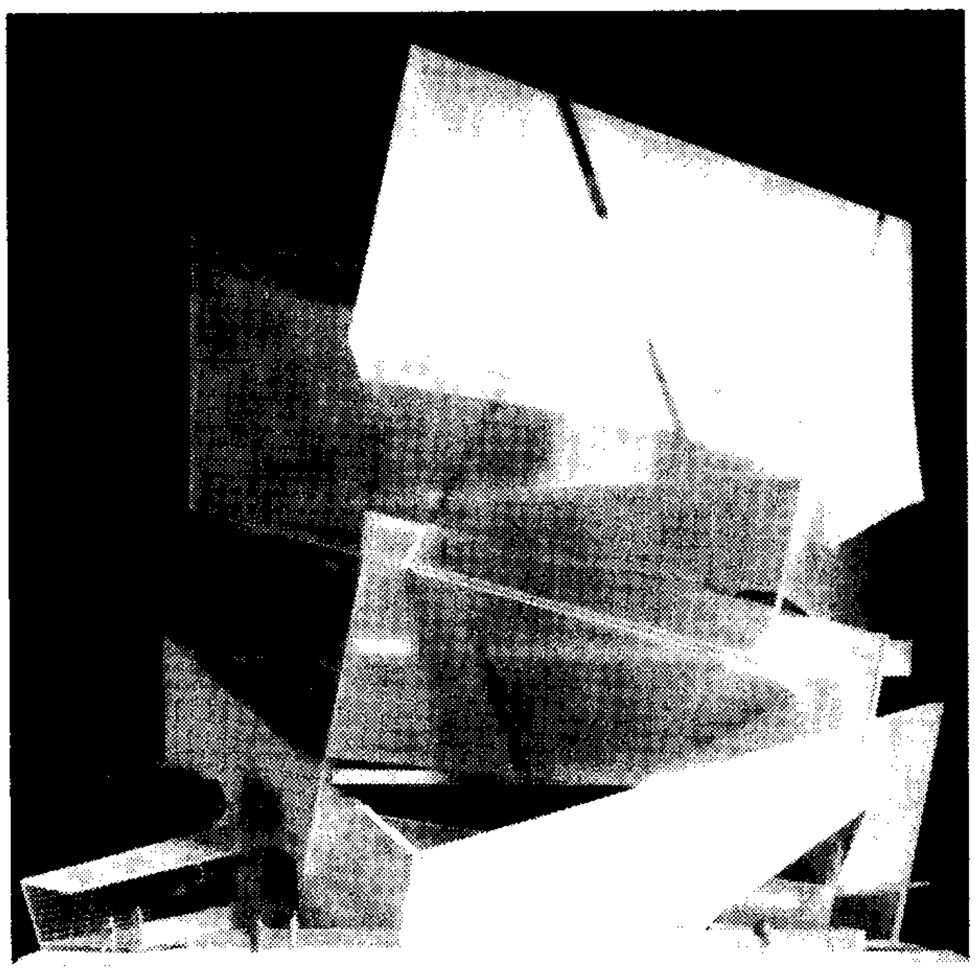
Why should walls be vertical? Why floors or ceilings, for that matter? Much more fun to go in for a totally non-orthogonal, irregular geometry to give new perceptions of time, space and movement. Never mind that such shapes are difficult to draw, let alone build or use, for nobody will admit to being unable to read architectural drawings — especially if he or she is the client.

But what is it? No, it is not an opera house — good try! Nor is it a fire station or a cathedral. Nor is it a satirical photo-montage by the cartoonist Louis Hellman, for this is deadly serious. This is a boiler house; that is, *the* Boilerhouse for — as all the world now knows — this is the proposed new building for the Victoria & Albert Museum to be erected, if that is the right word, in Exhibition Road, London, England. It is a bold project to trump grand projects in Paris like the pyramid at the Louvre — I quote Dr Alan Borg, director of the V&A. And it will only cost £45 million: not much to ask when, after 144 years, the museum is to introduce entrance charges.

Dr Borg has been in South Kensington for less than a year. As he succeeded the two worst directors in the history of the institution, many were prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt. Now he has revealed his true colours. He is yet another publicity-seeker: a man for the sensational gesture who wants to walk on the world stage. And no better way to get publicity than by commissioning a "controversial" piece of architecture.

After all, being a museum director is pretty boring unless it is an opportunity for self-promotion. We should have known as much from the way he earlier trivialised and vulgarised the staid old Imperial War Museum. Caring little for art or objects, Dr Borg belongs to that new breed of professional, careerist museum directors who use institutions for their own purposes. And soon, no doubt, it will be arise *Sir* Alan — Neil Cossons, dictator of the Science Museum over the road, has a handle, after all.

What Dr Borg was up to is evident from the competition the V&A affects to have held. The shortlist is wonderfully predictable, a calculated and biased pandering to architectural fashion. Some establishment knights were included, of course, in the shape of Foster and Hopkins; then several more whizzy High Tech boys (and girls): Grimshaw, Ritchie and Jiricna. Some Neo-Corbusians, Benson & Forsyth, were invited as they are doing the Museum of Scotland. But they were up against two names chosen to be chosen, two glittering stars of the avant-garde in the architectural schools: Zaha Hadid and Daniel Libeskind.



One simply had to win, or the judges would be dismissed as unimaginative, cowardly, conventional. It could not be Hadid after the stupid people of Cardiff had the effrontery to reject her brilliant design for an opera house. So it had to be Libeskind.Who? I can assure you he is a household name in such places as the Architectural Association in London and UCLA, California, where he is now a professor. Born in Poland, he is now an American — and even has a post-graduate degree from the University of Essex.

Both Libeskind and Hadid are prominent Deconstructionists, masters of the incomprehensible, beguiling draughtsmen and stars of that fashion which emerged in the 1980s for rejecting conventional architectural forms in favour of an irrational, exploding geometry.

It is an idea, of course, borrowed from philosophy and semiotics, but remains ridiculously compromised in the vapid world of architecture as gravity declines to be deconstructed — and boring human beings still seem to prefer level floors. No matter. At least Libeskind has built more than Hadid — not much, but there are several museums in the pipeline. His main work is the Jewish Museum in Berlin and, given its nature, nobody would dream of criticising that.

"Britain has seen some very exciting proposals to celebrate the millennium," trills Dr Borg, "but none... have [sic] so far grasped the opportunity which now exists to do something exciting and challenging with architecture, to create a building in London which can achieve the status of a national icon, as the Eiffel Tower does for Paris or the Empire State Building for New York. In Daniel Libeskind, we know we have selected an architect who can give us that building..."

But is such a building, such a self-indulgent gesture, what London or the V&A actually *needs*? Does Dr Borg know, or care, what the poor, underfunded V&A is for? It is a prosaic sort of place, displaying objects of art and craft. Its architecture is not very distinguished, but the buildings are decent, interesting and work. No knighthoods in looking after them, of course.

Why can't Dr Borg be content with a Big Wheel? Why, indeed, is Britain — ostensibly so proud to be a post-Christian secular society — bothering to celebrate the chronological accident of the millennium at all? The thing is becoming a curse, with the thought of millions of lottery dosh from the millennium commission eliciting the silliest and most pointless — and sometimes pestilent — proposals. I think I would like to hibernate and wake up in 2001 when it is all over — or, perhaps, if the future belongs to the likes of Mr Libeskind and Dr Borg, not at all.

'Piloti'

Painted Bronze (1960) is two Balantine Ale cans cast in bronze, complete with painted labels. Superficially it looks real, yet the surface and edges of the cans are slightly uneven, the letters too free and schematised. What we see is something that resists easy definition. It sits there, quietly humming with its perpetual oscillation between reality and illusion. And while offering us a multiplicity of readings concerning how it may be related to a beer can, and what is the possible significance of a beer can, it ultimately insists on its own autonomy, on being a thing in itself.

CARL FREEDMAN,
Review of Jasper Johns: The Sculptures, Guardian.

Pseuds Corner

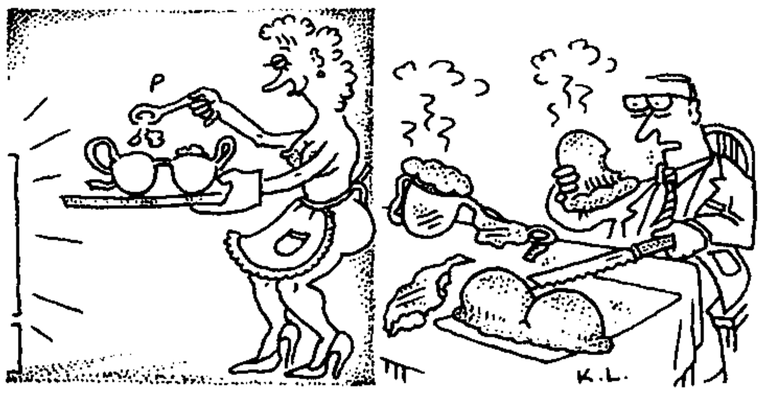
Births
Wood, Helen. April 18th 7:12pm, a daughter to Delia Wood and Mark Pringle. See her home page at http://www.pringco.co.uk/pringco/helen.html

Guardian

The shuttle and crew were menaced by Wainwright's decidal to navigate not at all, fairing the calmer waters of elsewhere. The journey altered its course a little but remained sane.

The third and final stage lifted wee mashed ones high into the dark sky, rose steadily and uninhindered by turbulence flew around with the maverick pilot Mike C for a genre blasting 60 minutes of futuristic fury...

JOANNA JONES,
Land of Club, Leicester Mercury



Hadrian Piggot makes objects which explore the dysfunction of a society obsessed with hygiene. Harriet Jackman, who bakes bread inside women's underwear which she collects from thrift shops, combines notions of female sexuality and feminine labour.

Livewire

Sir, I confess a temptation to scan your accounts of memorial services to spot the stars (Mr Christian's letter; May 6). Yet memorial services play far more serious roles.

Their immediate value is the provision, for all sorts of people with full diaries, of an opportunity to pay public respect to those who have lived and died and to acknowledge their contribution to wider communities. In allowing space and time for the dead, they emphasise the role of death in enforcing the prioritisation of values and relationships in a mortally limited life...

PETER C. JUPP
(Director of the National Funerals College), letter to The Times

In performance last year (Ron) Athey pierced his scalp with dozens of 14-inch lumbar needles to create a crown of thorns, stapled his scrotum and stuck meat hooks through his limbs. I was expecting to find it repugnant and gratuitous, but the tableaux were beautifully staged, the experience redemptive and moving.

JUDITH PALMER
Independent

Passions are all-consuming, selfish and tangible. Food is a passion. Juicy, piquant blackberries plucked fresh from the bramble. Drink. The woody richness of Beaujolais permeating bouche. Sex. Licking clean the salty thimble of her navel as she spread-eagles on silk. And money, Betty, money is a passion, too. The tastiest of all.

TOM FREMANTLE
runner-up Night and Day
(Mail on Sunday Review) literary competition
(judges M. Dobbs, F. Weldon, J. Mortimer).

CONTRIBUTORS: P. Millar, P. Barnes, E. Gittins, G. Hutchinson, A. Campbell, S. Watkins, J. James.

£10 paid for entries

EYE

QED: Brave Hearts (BBC1)
Knife To The Heart (BBC1)
Ratings Crisis (ITV)

THE standard history of British television — *Box of Delights* by Hilary Kingsley & Geoff Tibbals — has a fascinating section on the first transmission, in 1958, of the BBC fly-in-the-hospital series, *Your Life In Their Hands*, the product of TV's early realisation that it was no accident that surgeons call their workplace an operating *theatre*, when the obvious word would have been *room*.

Three suicides were attributed to the series, with viewers reportedly gassing themselves rather than face the operations featured on the screen. The *British Medical Journal* in an editorial accused the BBC of "pandering to the morbid". A Harley Street psychiatrist called the show "a psychologically dangerous experiment that could turn people into hypochondriacs".

You hope, for their own sakes, that the medics who voiced those concerns — and remember, it was in black and white then and you couldn't even see the blood — are not still around to watch today's output. For the BBC's "pandering to the morbid" has now reached epidemic proportions.

Last week, while the six-part history of transplant surgery **Knife To The Heart** came to a close on BBC1 on Tuesday, the same channel launched a new series of the science show **QED** next night with a documentary about a radical new method of open-heart surgery. It was probably a good thing the BSE scare meant that relatively few viewers would be having offal in their TV suppers.

Both programmes displayed the symptoms first identified in *Your Life In Their Hands*, the only difference over the decades being a greater technical panache.

The first complaint was talking up the gravity of the material: that Munchausen's Syndrome which increasingly afflicts documentary voice-overs. The doctor featured in the *QED* film — who cuts dead heart muscle out of the organ to help it function better — had "sent shockwaves through the medical world — some say he's a madman but some say he's a genius". The doctor featured in the *Knife To The Heart* film — who is genetically engineering pig hearts for transplant to humans — had come up with "what is the most promising — though controversial — solution". In the battle for viewers, medical documentary television has gradually moved from an ambition to educate to an intent to shock and outrage.

Both shows included medical documentary's visual clichés number one and two. The first is the surgeon cradling the human heart in his hand, like a chef selecting sweetbreads. This shot is now as familiar and tedium-inducing to the average television viewer as the blue view of planet earth from space, yet directors of cardiac documentaries feel endlessly compelled to use it. The second cliché, rapidly catching up on the first, is the frame held from the top of a flight of carpeted domestic stairs, as a breathless heart disease victim demonstrates how difficult it is to walk upstairs.

Knife To The Heart also showed dangerous signs of having picked up, in addition to the standard pornography of operating theatre footage, a cross-infection from *Crimewatch UK*: the pornography of reconstruction. It wasn't enough for the commentary to mention that donor organs had been taken — "harvested", as the doctors say — from a 19-year-old boy knocked off his bike by a car. Here, in slow motion was a teenager out for a rural ride, the speeding vehicle looming up behind, the screech and bump.

The way things are going, a team of top cardiologists may soon be needed at the **ITV Network Centre** following the commercial channel's recent blood pressure-inducing collapse in ratings and advertising revenue and the BBC's best audience share figures since five-way competition began. The dramatic recent shift in the fortunes of terrestrial broadcasters — ITV and Channel 4 losing the plot, the BBC finding it — was charted in this column long before such views became fashionable.

Let Square Eyes, then, offer another exclusive gloss on a strange media story widely reported last week. In the run-up to last Christmas, Granada television released a feature-length edition of *Coronation Street*, featuring the QE2 honeymoon of Curly and Raquel. This was lavishly labelled "Never To Be Seen On TV". Last month — after more than 100,000 people had shelled out their £12.99 on this promise of a unique experience — the feature-length edition mysteriously appeared in the ITV schedules. Following complaints to the ITC and trading standards officers, Granada refused to refund the purchasers' money but agreed to send a free copy of a book about Coronation Street to each of them as compensation.

This strange episode has been viewed by most as evidence of the deviousness and ruthless marketing methods now rampant at the once liberal Granada. In fact, more interestingly, the incident reveals the level of desperation at the Network Centre. Short of hits, they realised that the video-only *Corrie* story was a guaranteed ratings-winner and so they ignored consumer law and put it out. That's how bad things are.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS

WHILE the rest of the country was enjoying a restful bank holiday weekend, the man in charge of drama series at BBC Television, Michael Wareing, was carrying out an urgent investigation into one of his colleagues.

This followed a conversation last Friday with a leading TV dramatist, who informed Wareing of some startling allegations about the relationship between a senior BBC executive and an independent production company.

If the allegations are true, the BBC could be facing its biggest scandal in years. Watch this space...

PRODUCER Choice has scaled new heights of tragi-farce with the news, reported in the BBC journal *Ariel*, that in 1996/97 studio based network TV will be produced in-house wherever possible.

To understand the Kafkaesque significance of this, a recap is needed...

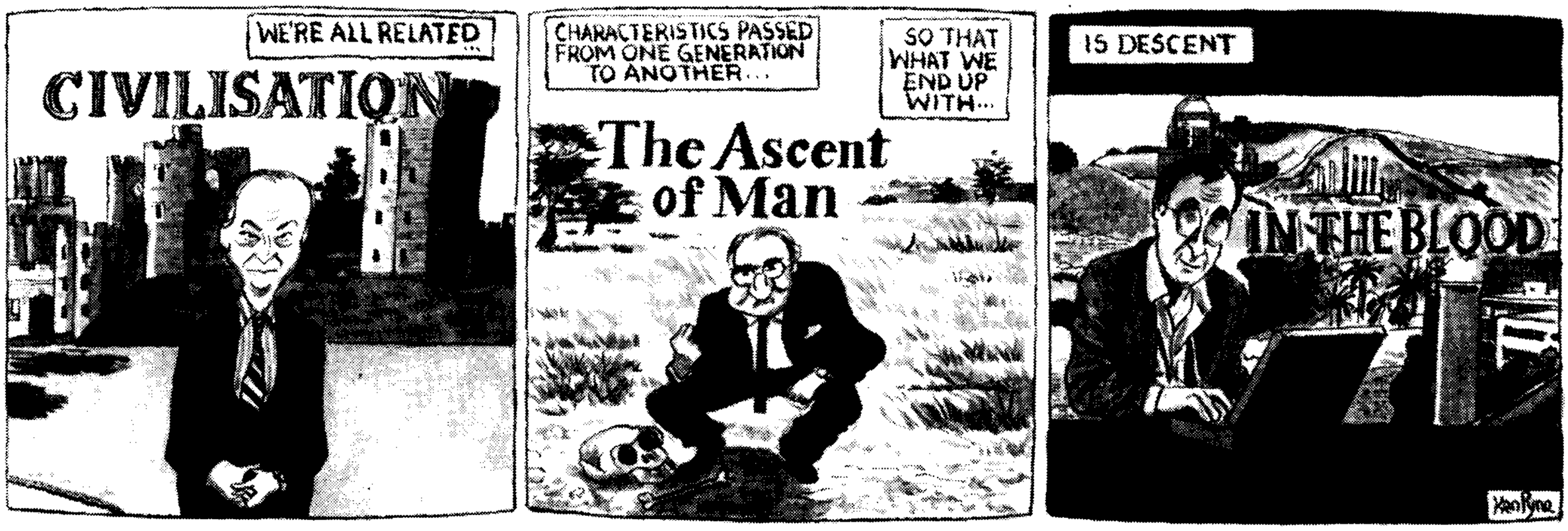
First it was decided that producers should shop around for crews, editing, studios, etc. This led to the decimation of the world's most comprehensive, experienced and talented craft base. The best left quickly — and the dead wood remained.

Independent facilities houses in Soho were then encouraged to invest millions in new technology and equipment, believing much BBC work would head their way. Then in May last year the BBC ran out of money because money spent on outside facilities is "real" money as opposed to internal "paper" money which used to pay for internal facilities.

Production managers were quietly told to start re-using in-house facilities again to resolve the cash crisis, while publicly the BBC kept insisting "Producer Choice is alive and kicking." Now it emerges producers have the choice to use... er, only BBC studios after a deal was struck between Network Television and BBC Resources. "Very much in the ethos of Producer Choice," says BBC MD Will Wyatt. Really? No, not really.

THE axe has finally fallen on the hapless BBC Arabic TV hacks after the unions voted to accept a financial package from managers.

Their decision was made easier after management said it only had a fixed sum for the workers. For every day notice was not served by staff, they claimed, £7,000 would be shaved off the lump sum available.



MORE evidence of the "impartiality" of the BBC's political staff continues to emerge (see *Eye* 897) from Auntie's high tech bunker at Millbank, opposite the Houses of Parliament.

Paul Gardner, a producer on the "objective" BBC TV programme *On The Record*, has been appointed special adviser to treasury minister William Waldegrave.

Gardner's next job — if he follows the career path of his predecessor in Willie's office, David Rutley — will be as a Tory parliamentary candidate. All, of course, totally "unbiased".

THE BBC has *never* had so many men in suits doing its accounting — yet this year the Radio 4 budget has been miscalculated to the tune of more than £1 million.

Suddenly it's emergency cutback time on programmes — another triumph for Birtism!

MORE than 100 downtrodden staff at BBC "Post Production Resources" were peeved at their recent agm at TV Centre to find the meeting was largely a platform for managers to reveal their version of Birt's latest "Efficiency Vision" of a digital future.

Rather more entertaining, however, was the interlude supplied by overworked staff who had been dispatched to make a video for the event. Their brief was to depict an uplifting image of a multimedia finishing house five years in the future: an efficient, dedicated workforce toiling at work stations in "nice, light, airy conditions", all happy with their lot.

Sadly for the Birtists the oppressed workers deviated from their brief and instead produced a vision of a luridly lit room stuffed with weirdly dressed automatons hunched over computers. This nightmare scene then ended with four members of staff actually being murdered by a psychotic "Robo-editor".

Judging by the mirth this *2001* piss-take generated when shown at the agm — and even the office tea lady had been dressed up in *Star Trek* style for the video — production staff seemed to prefer it to the Birtian mantras delivered from the platform.

MORE on the film industry's confused approach to Northern Ireland, in particular Sony's difficulties with a pathetic £45 million IRA movie highlighted in *Eye* 893.

Then, Sony's Columbia Pictures subsidiary was still planning to, er, shoot in Belfast. The studio's own nervously written publicity material described *The Devil's Own* as "a suspense thriller starring Harrison Ford as a New York City cop who unwittingly adopts former IRA terrorist Brad Pitt.

"When the former IRA commando's old associates locate him, they begin exerting pressure on him to revert to his old life of terrorism. When his new father uncovers the truth, he sets out to stop his son from proceeding with plans that would ruin their new life together."

Leaving aside the improbability of Ford's character actually adopting a thirtysomething man (albeit one with a cute ass), the film's apparently sympathetic treatment of Pitt's IRA activities suddenly became a trifle embarrassing in the aftermath of the Canary Wharf bombing.

But since Gerry Adams's post-ceasefire trip to Los Angeles culminated in his birthday party being held at the home of a Columbia Pictures executive, the studio is desperately trying to tone down the IRA link, without actually being that rude about the IRA.

Now, Pitt's character is a peaceable Catholic who "as a child sees his father shot dead by Loyalist terrorists. The brutality he witnesses in his home changes the boy's life and he grows up to join an illegal paramilitary group himself". Not the IRA, of course, just an organisation with similar balaclavas, bombs, bullets and beards. Despite a couple of pre-Docklands blast trips to Belfast by the fearless Pitt, he and his rugged co-star have decided location work there is no longer a good idea and filming, currently taking place in New York, will transfer to Dublin in July.

Let's hope that Loyalists, who presumably aren't going to come out of this at all well, have a sense of humour and decide to stay their side of the border while the Americans are in town.

HACKWATCH: PAULA YATES *Sun*

"SHE's witty, outrageous, gutsy, earthy, flirtatious, quick, acid, unpredictable, sexy, shocking, outspoken... AND SHE JOINS THE *SUN* NEXT WEEK." Who she? The thrilling announcement, in the *Sun* of 24 February, was illustrated only by a teasing silhouette.

Two days later, all was revealed. "Paul Yates is one of Britain's most talked-about women," the paper claimed, below a photo of la Yates displaying her much talked-about breasts. "For ten years the wife of Live Aid hero Bob Geldof, she's now pregnant with Aussie rocker Michael Hutchence's baby. But Paula Yates is still an independent woman with gutsy views on everything." You mean she's not merely an old slapper who goes to bed with fading rock stars and has a gaggle of oddly-named children? Certainly not...

27 February: Under a typically modest slogan — "She's Outrageous, She's Outspoken" — Paula raves on about the sexiness of fire-fighters: "Look at a fireman and all you can think about is a hosepipe." Meanwhile, just in case we'd forgotten, she mentions that she is pregnant by Michael Hutchence.

5 March: She drools over "the unimaginably sexy Shaun Ryder".

12 March: Any woman who has stared at Ian Wright in his clinging football shorts "will agree there is nothing small-time about him."

19 March: It's Mike Tyson's turn: "I like the way he goes into the ring with his 19-inch neck twitching like Red Rum's buttocks." Nor should we overlook Frank Bruno, whose penis "appeared to be pretending it was an anaconda for the photocall". And what of Paula's own love-life? "I was reading about why pregnant women want sex all the time... Luckily, nature has designed it so that the father of your baby still thinks you're as attractive as ever." If she and Michael maintain their present sexual pace, Paula boasts, "the new INXS album will probably take five years to make". While we are still digesting this revolting morsel, she informs us that her daughter Pixie is "a little pink-cheeked funny sugared bun". Thanks a lot.

26 March: Men! One-track minds, every one of 'em. "It doesn't matter who the man is, he wants to watch films with naked women in them... They don't notice the sets, the lovely sofa in the hero's flat... No, what they notice is how many buttocks per frame they have been treated to. Now why is this, I wonder?" Paula, of course, would never dream of ogling men in this way.

2 April: Paula is saddened to hear that Sean Bean and Melanie Hill are to divorce. "It's often the case that sex symbols tend not to be that sexy as soon as the front door shuts... To us, he is an almost physically-perfect hunk. But to Melanie he's clearly just a bore." Not that this will stop her salivating over hunks: elsewhere in the column, she rebukes Brad Pitt for his modest claim that he is only average in bed. "I know Brad," she reveals. "How would he know he was average?"

30 April: On holiday in the Caribbean, Paula finds a stash of *Playgirl* magazines. "These magazines are most odd! *Playgirl* is filled with muscly men, their willies arranged like salad this way and that... And as most girls will tell you, it's impossible for fellas to look sexy in photos with their manhood dangling."

7 May: Paula is delighted to see George Michael back at the top of the charts — and "to see him soaking wet and shaking his body fur in the video was dreamy". She is equally enamoured of snooker player Ronnie O'Sullivan, "the lone interesting thing in a sport that consists of very peaky, dangerous-looking men in tight suits with one leg up on a table and their bottoms directly pointed at the TV cameras..." Footballers are much better: they "all look like male models and, I've noticed, have a keen interest in sex and shopping". Yum yum.

14 May: Watching the FA cup final, Paula had "a great view of Eric Cantona's majestic bottom and Ryan Giggs's bionic legs... From what I know of Ryan from my friends, it's a miracle he has the strength to run at that speed all afternoon — although at least I know why he wears those extra-long shorts..."

When the *Sun* promised us "an independent woman with gutsy views on everything", did it realise the "everything" in question would turn out to be men's willies?

HOW THEY ARE RELATED

MORE on the Innes clan, and Jocasta Innes's decorating company, Paint Magic.

Paint Magic featured prominently in BBC2's *Home Front*, an interior design programme produced by Daisy Goodwin (see last *Eye*), who happens to be Innes's daughter. (Daisy also produced BBC1's *Bookmark*, which featured a big plug for a travel book written by Jason Goodwin, er, Daisy's brother; but that's another story.)

Now another example of family togetherness has emerged in Hampstead, where Innes has one of her Paint Magic shops. She was recently phoned by the *Hampstead & Highgate Express*, the local paper, and was asked if she would "do up" a deserving local person's flat which would then be written about in a feature.

Innes said she would be delighted. The *Ham & High* set about finding a deserving local — but Innes was soon back on the phone. She had found someone herself, she said: her daughter. The local hacks nervously pointed out that her daughter lived in the east end of London, way out of their area, and anyway she was hardly a deserving person.

Innes disagreed. Her daughter was quite low paid, she insisted. The hacks were forced to suggest gingerly that it was not quite right that it was her own daughter's flat she would be decorating. "No one need know," persisted Innes. "We have different surnames, you see."

ADS & ADMEN

SICKEST advert of the year award goes to Ainscough Crane Hire Ltd of Bradley Lane, Wigan, a company which claims to be the "UK's leading independent crane hire specialists".

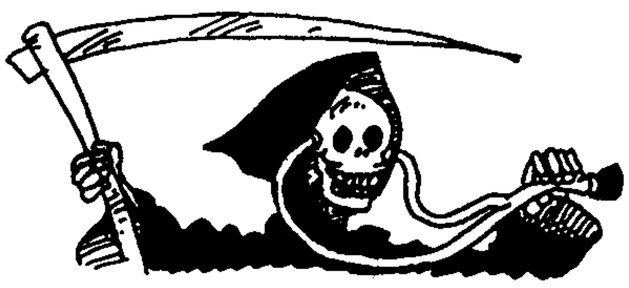
Its colour advertisement, last seen in the equally shamed *Construction News*, shows a smiling young schoolgirl standing at the roadside next to the open door of a saloon car. "Don't take lifts from strangers!" says the sensitive caption.

THE 22 May issue of *Jane's Defence Weekly* carried the full page advertisement for a splendid range of pilotless drones (or UAVs) from "Israel aircraft industries — the World's Leader in UAV Systems".

The drones are used to observe distant targets and improve the accuracy of artillery fire. This world-beating range — said the ad — had been "combat proven in the Gulf War", was "operational with the Israel Defence Forces" and "has met every challenge".

Er, what about its most recent challenge — the flight over the UN base at Qana in southern Lebanon — before and during an Israel defence force artillery attack which killed more than 100 Lebanese refugees "by mistake"? No mention of that in the ad.

"Somewhere out there is a huge bullet with your name on, Lieutenant Farquharson-Delancey-Postlethwaite"



DOING THE ROUNDS

"IT WOULD be a tragedy, not only for England but for the world if Professor Bhatt's contract is not renewed and the Vitamin B12 Unit at Chelsea and Westminster NHS trust is not reopened."

So said Professor Victor Herbert of **New York's Mount Sinai School of Medicine** in a letter to health secretary Stephen Dorrell. Despite a concerted five-month campaign from international medical experts and acutely anxious parents, Professor Bhatt's unit — one of only four such units in the world — has been shut, throwing the lives of 300 babies and children with severe genetic, neurological and metabolic diseases into jeopardy.

Professor Bhatt is "about the only physician in England capable of both diagnosing and effectively treating these rare conditions due to B12 deficiency." The managers of Chelsea and Westminster trust may survive without him, but his patients may not.

● THE recent news that pharmaceutical companies are interested in sponsoring NHS nurses has caused much alarm, but such practice is already commonplace.

Eli Lilly and Co. Ltd finance, albeit indirectly, the diabetic liaison nurse at **Avon's Weston area health trust**. Her role is to teach diabetic patients how to use insulin and, yes, Eli Lilly is one of the largest manufacturers of insulin in the world. Unfortunately no funding is available for the less pharmacologically friendly disciplines of child guidance and counselling services at Weston, which have all but disappeared.

● ON 7 March 1996 Julie Read, a coordinator for **Gloucestershire community health council**, wrote the following letter to Jeff James, chief executive of **Gloucester Health**. "Dear Mr James, In view of the press coverage recently concerning shortage of beds, the CHC members would very much like to know what the provision of beds is in this county, per 1,000 of the population."

On 18 April Caroline Fowles, director of performance management, replied on his behalf: "Dear Julie, As always, this is not a simple issue. The latest health service indicators which we have just received relate to the year 1993/94 and are therefore of limited value to us. The indicator profile no longer includes bed numbers and has moved on to look at a different range of areas, as outlined in the attached copy of the health service indicator provider profile menu sheet. From a purchaser perspective, the comparative measures tend to relate to finished consultant episodes, percentage day case work and ratio of new to follow up out patient appointments. As we purchase on different measures, it is not possible to indicate the current provision of beddage in the county."

● BED vacancies are less of a problem for **East Sussex health authority** — its previous incarnation (Worthing health authority) negotiated a seven-year agreement with **Haven Healthcare** to provide 50 private nursing home beds for high dependency elderly patients from last May.

At the end of October only 46 percent of the beds had been used which, at £400 per bed per week, meant the taxpayer paid £240,000 for empty beds. From November to April, between £4,000 and £10,000 a week went on empty beds. As an ESHA spokesman put it: "The predictions made by Worthing HA were as accurate as could be made." God help us.

● THE exodus from the **South and East Wales ambulance trust** (*Eyes passim*) is gathering pace. John Jones, transport services manager for south Wales, is home on full pay after his suspension; and Chris Wheat, associate director of non-emergency services, has joined operations director Ian Coulton in taking early retirement.

Earlier this year chairman John Curteis and chief executive David Triggs bailed out following a Welsh Office investigation which turned up a £1 million deficit in the trusts accounts. Triggs has since applied for the post of chief executive at the **Chippenham-based Wiltshire ambulance trust**. In the musical chairs world of NHS executives, he must be in with a chance.

● PROFESSOR John Whicher, head of pathology at **Leeds general infirmary** when whistle-blowing biochemist Dr Chris Chapman exposed scientific fraud (*Eyes passim*), has taken early retirement before the outcome of a long running inquiry into the case is announced. As the good professor hit 50 before leaving, his retirement provision is substantially more generous than that imposed on Dr Chapman, who was sacked the day before his 50th birthday, thus depriving him of 10 years of pension payments.

● ANOTHER NHS witch hunt victim is Peter Bowell, laboratory manager at **Oxford transfusion centre** and an outspoken opponent of last year's restructuring of the **National Blood Association** (ie mass service cutbacks). Mr Bowell was ordered to leave his job "within 24 hours" despite being given three months' notice. Colleagues applauded him as he left.

● **BIRMINGHAM health authority** wants to know how 10 sacks of internal documents it paid a private contractor to incinerate turned up in a skip at a shopping centre. Any thoughts?

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

WHEN agriculture minister Douglas "Piggy" Hogg banned the sale of cattle over 30 months old at the height of the BSE scare, and later decided these animals should be slaughtered and turned into toxic waste, he set up a chain of events which is now working up to a major scam, potentially ripping off the British taxpayer by £5 million a week.

Farmers were to be paid 86p a kilo for old cows, netting some £500 a beast, live weight, and prime beef cattle were bought up for destruction at 111p, reflecting their greater value. In a sick parody of the normal meat marketing process, Hogg originally ordered that these animals should be presented to "collection centres" at markets and then transferred to the slaughterhouses.

But almost immediately some farmers protested that they wanted to by-pass the markets and take their animals direct to slaughterhouses. The obliging Hogg set up the arrangements and, because many slaughterhouses do not have facilities for weighing live animals, adjusted payments to 222p/kilo "deadweight". This was twice the rate for the live animal on the basis that, after slaughter a cow's carcase weighs about half its live weight.

What Hogg forgot, or never knew, is that although worn-out old cows at the end of their working lives produce carcases of approximately 50 per cent of live weight, prime young male cattle, known as steers, bred for meat produce considerably heavier carcases. This is particularly true of continental breeds which can yield 65 per cent of live weight.

This means that a farmer might get £660 for a live "heavy" steer, but £860 for its carcase, a clear £200 profit. But that is to reckon without the greed and ambitions of a number of the few slaughterhouses licensed to handle these mature cattle, who are refusing to accept cattle direct from the farms. Instead, they have appointed their own "middlemen" who are buying up heavy beasts from desperate farmers who have yet to get their animals booked into the system, owing to the massive backlog of cattle awaiting killing.

Needless to say, the "middlemen" are buying up at "liveweight" rates and then claiming the "deadweight" rate, splitting the difference with their grateful slaughterhouse employers. If the killing rate reaches its projected 25,000 animals a week, this means taxpayers will be shelling out up to £5 million a week over the odds on a scheme already set to cost £2.5 billion — for cattle, of course, which the government's own scientific advisers consider are safe to eat.

With an estimated 250,000 mature steers backed up in the system, the taxpayer stands to lose potentially £50 million, money which at least could have been paid to farmers, or if "Piggy" had been properly advised, need not have been paid out at all. The ultimate irony is that the cattle jumping to the head of the killing queue are the prime cattle, bred for beef, most of them from BSE-free herds. Meanwhile, the old dairy cows, which are most prone to BSE, are being pushed to the back of the queue until the payment bonanza is exhausted.

One group determined to bring this scam to a premature halt is the Quality Meat and Livestock Alliance, led by Ian Lentern, a Cornish cattle breeder, abattoir owner and butcher. Not only is he convinced that killing perfectly healthy cattle for the sake of "public confidence" is immoral, he has managed to convince the high court of justice in London that the destruction scheme may be illegal as well.

Last week, supported by his 50 slaughtering members and another 80 slaughterers from another group in the north of England, he got leave to appeal for judicial review from Mr Justice Carnworth. The ministry of agriculture, aka the Maffia, did not contest the application and a full hearing is set for some time in the next four weeks.

NOT entirely without self-interest, one complaint of these abattoir owners, who run small to medium-sized units, is that they were not given a look in when the lucrative killing contracts were doled out to a group of larger abattoirs, each being paid £87.50 for every animal slaughtered.

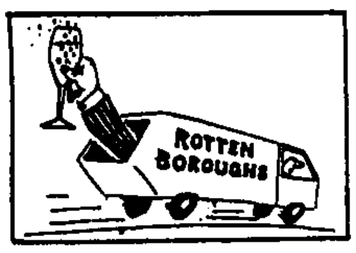
One undoubtedly deserving member of this lucky group is JH Cobdens, of Langport in Somerset, which has been licensed to kill 1,750 animals a week, worth more than £150,000 a week in fees. No doubt its owners were highly embarrassed to find local television crews stationed outside its doors following up allegations from the Somerset trading standards that the company had been involved in the export of beef to France with forged BSE-free certificates. It is reassuring to know that the Maffia has selected its slaughterhouses with such care.

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

ALBERT

WITH THE PRESENT B.S.E. SITUATION, PERHAPS I COULD INTRODUCE YOU TO THE BENEFITS OF 'LLAMA FARMING 'MR MACDONALD!
BUGGER OFF!
THIS IS TRADITIONAL BEEF COUNTRY SON! AN' IF THE LADS 'ROUND 'ERE EVER FIND OUT THAT YOU'RE....
WILL YOU TWO SHURRUP!!
WE'RE TRYIN' TO WATCH 'ONE MAN AN' HIS SHERPA' HERE!



THE
Rotten Borough Advertiser

Friday. 31 May 1996

UNLUCKY HEATHER

FIVE of Lambeth's seven directors have failed to survive the first year of Heather Rabbatts' reign as chief executive.

Three of them — at housing, finance and legal services — faced disciplinary charges, the task of bringing them falling to former acting chief executive Sari Conway. However, with Conway leaving to become CEO in Eastbourne, it looks likely that all the cases will be dropped.

Former director of housing Peter Camp, who received £65,000 to stay at home for a year, has been allowed to go after he was said to be too ill to attend his hearing. Former finance director Gary Moss has had charges dropped against him and recently left with the statutory cheque in his back pocket. The decision to let Moss go followed the arrival of his replacement from Bent, Michael Crich.

Crich, who gained notoriety in Bent when one of the business units he set up, Ad shop, went bust in 1994 with debts of £400,000, has the unenviable task of transforming Lambeth's pisspoor finances and doubtless will want to avoid the sort of mistake he made at Bent.

Crich can at least consider himself lucky he left Bent before an ad hoc "investigation and scrutiny" sub-committee was set up to examine why the recommendations of the inquiry into the Ad shop, which called for disciplinary action against council officials, was ignored. Other areas being investigated by the committee will be the development of a golf course next to Northwick Park hospital and multifarious allegations of misdemeanours concerning Bent's leisure complexes.

Only Lambeth's unqualified director of legal services, Paul Lally, still faces the threat of disciplinary action. Although his hearing has been delayed for more than a year for a variety of reasons, at one point it was postponed for two months after the accident-prone Lally broke his wrist.

Despite changes at the top, little has changed for long suffering residents, who still receive an abysmal service. Rabbatts' big ideas have come a cropper — in particular the failure of new competency tests for staff. The tests have been deemed illegal, so staff keep their jobs even if they fail them. Rabbatts, a barrister, imparted the embarrassing news to angry councillors after being warned by head of human resources Graham Fallows that sacking staff who failed would lead to court action Lambeth would lose.

RED FACE OF THE WEEK

LABOUR-controlled Kirklees council in West Yorkshire wants to put up a statue to its greatest son, the late Lord Wislon of Rievaulx, who was born locally, so it asked the public for donations

Around £25,000 is needed, but six months on only £250 has been collected. Red-faced councillors claim the original appeal wasn't widely enough publicised and are going to ask Lord Dickie Attenborough and Wislon's biographer, Ben Pimlott, to help. Perhaps they should try the estates of Sir Eric Miller and Lord Kagan.

LABOUR ISN'T WORKING...

THE suspension of all but three of Hackney's 39 Labour councillors became inevitable after 17 of the comrades in the "manifesto group" refused to obey a three-line whip, and deputy leader Meral Ece fell out with council leader Nick Tallentire over the choice of mayor.

The sticky issue of who should become mayor came to a head when Tallentire was allegedly told by Hackney's chief executive, Tony Elliston, that Coun Linda Hibbard, mayor elect, faced possible questioning by police as a result of the MacDonald report into recruitment and corruption following the Bernard Crofton fiasco (see *Eyes passim ad nauseam*). Elliston denies having said any such thing.

The suspension decision by Labour's national executive committee was also influenced by Labour MPs getting into a spat over Crofton. In the Crofton corner are Ken Livingstone and Jeremy Corbyn, while supporting MacDonald's inquiry, which branded Crofton a "liar", is Brian Sedgemore.

Terry Ashton, of the Greater London Labour party disciplinary panel, found the local party so riven that the least worst option was to suspend nearly every Labour councillor and to wait and see how many of them agree to toe the Walworth Road party line rather than face expulsion.

THOSE JUNKETS IN FULL...

THE last *Eye* detailed how the provost of Renfrewshire council Nancy Allison went to Germany recently for the retirement party of an official of twin town Furth. The £700 spent on flights raised eyebrows as the council had just announced savage cuts, including plans to close an outdoor centre for deprived children.

Allison has now asked her council for retrospective permission for the trip. The vote over whether she should use taxpayers' money in such a way split the council down the middle. Eventually a shameless Allison had to use her own casting vote... and her expenses were allowed! Now Scottish Nationalists are trying to stop the Labour council's plans for a £1 million suite of council offices.

Meanwhile a group of South Tyneside Labour members attending a conference in Gateshead on how to spend lottery money decided to stay the night in the Geordie town even though they were only seven miles from home.

When challenged on why they didn't simply go home on the Metro light railway or make the 20-minute drive home in their cars, one councillor remarked helpfully that people could vote against him next May if they didn't like it. At the end of the same meeting the Labour group voted to increase attendance allowances by 25 per cent, a total of some £40,000, while introducing fines on pensioners' library books to raise £4,000.

IN BRIEF

NORFOLK: Graham Farrant quit as £80,000 county chief executive after 10 days. He left when councillors learnt he had been an assistant divisional director of housing at Tory Westminster when it moved the homeless into asbestos-ridden tower blocks. But who is to blame for the cock-up: Labour and Liberal councillors for not noticing the "Westminster" word when checking his cv, or Price Waterhouse which charged £20,000 for headhunting him?

TOWER HAMLETS: More evidence of lawlessness under the old Lib Dem regime has emerged: officers in a Bethnal Green neighbourhood centre spent nearly £10,000 of public money on... themselves. Around £4,000 went on cricket gear, including boxes, to host a staff tournament; £4,000 was "loaned" to an officer to buy a company car (no record was kept); and £500 was spent at Marks & Spencer, but no one knows what on.

GLASGOW: The new grandstand at Celtic FC — completed two years after Labour gave permission to fierce local opposition — has brought the predicted grief to most of the 228 council tenants nearby. On match days noisy fans march past, and often through, their gardens; but every day there is the constant gloom created by the stand's long shadows. Parsimonious "new" Labour has said all the houses will be demolished and taxpayers will get the £1 million bill. Why not the club?

STIRLING: Newly formed North Lanarkshire council is having a £600,000 refit at its Civic Centre, and Labour leader Harry McGuigan's office is getting five-star treatment: Italian designer wallpaper at £271 a roll; Dutch carpets at £51 a metre; new leather suites; plus an en suite shower room and bidet so he can rinse his bottom between meetings. FACT: In April the council cut its budget by £20m and raised council tax by 17 per cent.

BIRTSPEAK

The Elastic of Empowerment

Have you ever thought of empowerment as being like an elastic band? Officers in Charge and I have been thinking of it in this way at a recent Network Meeting. Here is an illustration showing some of the boundaries of empowerment mentioned in the article in National Insight this month. [*An illustration of an elastic band follows, outside which are the words "Illegality", "Mandatory Instruments", "Taxpayers' Charter", "Fairness" and "National Tax System".*]

The idea is that all of us in IRSE are inside the elastic band pushing at the boundaries along which are quality standards and other limitations.

— Letter from David Bean, Controller, in May edition of Insight South East, *a publication for Inland Revenue staff*

HUSBAND

Letters

Lookalike

Princess

Logo

Sir,

I wonder if any of your readers have noticed the similarity between the Princess of Wales as featured on the cover of your organ (897) and the logo of the National Association of Theatre Nurses?

I am sure they must be related and we should be told.

Yours sincerely,
ANDY MARDELL,
Cardiff, Wales.

Out of commission

Sir,

Correct me if I'm wrong — is Goldsmith J. the same as NS 2/Lt J. Goldsmith, Int. Corps, serving in Berlin when I was (1954-56), and later to marry the Bolivian tin heiress Patino (sic)?

He must be British if he's held the Queen's Commission.

Sincerely,
J.R. MacLACHLAN,
Preston, Lancs.

Plane dealing

Sir,

I read with interest the series of judiciously leaked stories regarding cock-ups during servicing of RAF aircraft by civilian contractors. Outside contracting was brought in against the furious protests of senior officers who saw their empires being eroded. The kind of mistakes you have described are by no means new. The only difference is that in the past they could be covered up in house and cloaked by the official secrets act. No tender or budget required. "Competing for quality" may be far from ideal but at least we get to read of the cock-ups in the good pages of PRIVATE EYE. *Perhaps you should treat your disgruntled informants with a bit more scepticism.*

The RAF is in no position to throw stones at "civvie" servicing. Recent accidents such as the fatal Hawk accident which took off after servicing with disconnected ailerons and the Nimrod which suffered an engine fire and crashed on its first flight after maintenance (not by flight refuelling) are but two examples. Civilian maintenance in the UK is of a very high standard — and if it isn't the Civil Aviation Authority will quickly remove the air operators certificate of an offending airline. In house military servicing is subject to no such scrutiny, however much they may wish to look down on "civvie" standards.

Yours faithfully,
J. MUNN,
Address unknown.

"You spoil that spider."

Sore points

Sir,

In response to "Eye told you so" (Rotten Borough Advertiser, 5 March).

Mr Barratt did not find that the decision to move homeless families into the Points was "part of a policy of moving Labour voters into Labour wards". In fact, he clearly states (p.411 8.67) "I express no view on the subject whatsoever."

The EYE *says: "Councillors and officers repeatedly took risks with people's health." Yet Barratt admits (p.463 9.9): "If all the senior Hsg officers were unaware of the reality of the current asbestos risks it is unlikely that this issue was ever raised with the Cllrs exercising informal control." There is no evidence to the contrary. I cannot believe Mr Barratt would have approved the following statement (Conclusions of the Review, Paragraph 7.2 of the Committee Report) if he had felt any such evidence existed: "For the avoidance of any possible doubt, Mr Barratt has assured the Chief Executive that he found no evidence whatsoever, during the course of the review, of any intent by any person deliberately to endanger the health of any of the Points' occupants."*

Yours sincerely,
COUN TIM JOINER,
Westminster Council Conservative Group.

Religious fervour

Sir,

The recent controversy in the Catholic church over the appointment of the new Bishop of Liverpool appears to have been solved by the late Benny Hill stepping into the breach.

Yours etc,
ENA B. RUSHTON,
c/o The Catholic Herald.

Indian givers

Sir,

I read the article "Brussels Sprouts" on page 15 of EYE *898. Shurely you can't be telling us that the Brazilian indians are so naive as to have put their trust in the European Union? I was under the impression that the EU's infamy with regard to Srebrenica and Gorazde and Greece's flagrant breach of EU and UN blockade rules in supporting Serbia was legendary worldwide. I'm a Eurocrat and even I'm ashamed.*

What makes these indians think that they are going to be any better off? Do they have oil, perhaps? I think we should be told.

ERIC HALL,
Brussels, Belgium.

Wild guess

Sir,

Your article on Camden was vintage PRIVATE EYE, *snappy, hard hitting and sparing no one. It was also wildly inaccurate.*

Councillors make senior appointments, not officers. We chose Steve Bundred because he was the best candidate in a strong field. Good people like to work in Camden.

Dennis Skinner is driving our regeneration programme, not Steve's car, and that after bidding successfully for the largest regeneration award in London. That's backing winners, not favouritism.

Although it is true that a large number of staff faced the sack if they did not accept new terms and conditions, at the end of the day the number who lost their jobs was less than the 3,000 stated by you. Well, actually, the number was zero, since you ask. And we are not paying out £500,000 to Colin Carmichael, either.

You didn't get it all wrong though, at least you spelt Camden correctly.

R.A. ARTHUR,
Leader of Camden Council.

Observer supplement

Sir,

As Alan Rusbridger makes his view of what constitutes a successful Sunday newspaper steadily clearer, an unrelenting diet of political stories read only by the terminally obsessed, coupled with the occasional vapid follow-up, I thank my lucky stars that I was one of those shown the door. I resent, however, the new regime's attempt to smear my name at the OBSERVER *by "revealing" the existence of the so-called Hogg Files (*PRIVATE EYE *896).*

In April last year I was taken on by Andrew Jaspan for a three month period as an editorial consultant and asked to conduct a "stock take" in the news room. Staff were fully informed — part of the exercise involved interviewing each reporter and a number of department heads at length, each of whom was told that my findings would eventually be submitted in a report to Jaspan. During this period I also carried out a weekly assessment of the paper's news coverage for the editor. These centred almost exclusively on the choice and projection of stories. Individual assessments were not the purpose of the exercise. At the end of the "consultancy" period I became Home Editor (News) and, sharing the collective responsibility for what appeared each week, deemed further such reports inappropriate.

Had Rusbridger rummaged further through the files he would have found my original letter of appointment making clear my initial role. Stoking up rumours about "secret police style" files, however, was obviously rather more useful when foisting his seven days a week GUARDIAN *on beleaguered* OBSERVER *hands.*

I would, by the way, have been grovellingly grateful for a newsroom investment of a fraction of what Guardian Media Group has thrown around in needless redundancies.

Yours etc,
ANDREW HOGG,
London SW6.

On the house

Sir,

R.A. Jones (Letters, EYE *898) rightly praises Welsh National Opera for its high quality performances at the New Theatre. But these are achieved against all odds: the acoustics don't help the orchestra and singers (Bryn Terfel for one says he won't sing there again), while the backstage crew work in cramped and sometimes dangerous conditions.*

A purpose-built opera house would solve these problems. It would also provide a venue for commercial musicals while WNO is on tour, thus avoiding the need for price rises at the box office. After making do in Cardiff for 50 years, Welsh National Opera deserves a home of its own.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT HARRIES,
Aberdare, Mid Glamorgan.

I-SPY

PLEASE DO NOT FEED YOUR LEFTOVERS TO THE ANIMALS

Food items containing MEAT OR MEAT PRODUCTS, such as sandwiches, pork pies, pasties and burgers may carry viruses which, although harmless to humans CAN CAUSE SERIOUS DISEASE IN GRASS EATING ANIMALS AND PIGS.

It is illegal to feed such products to livestock.
(The Diseases of Animals (Waste Food) Order 1973)

MAFF

Further information may be obtained from your local Animal Health Office of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Sir,

Re: BSE and the law. I enclose a photograph of a poster which I saw recently while on holiday in Cornwall. It seems that MAFF was well aware of the risk of feeding meat to herbivores back in 1973 when the order shown in the poster was issued. How was it that using meat in cattle food was ever allowed, especially as in the early '80s the producers were permitted to lower the temperatures at which the feed was processed.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY BATTERSBY,
Tellisford, Bath.

Oil flotation

Sir,

Whilst I wholly support your concern over the disposal or otherwise of redundant oil platforms, I must take issue with the HP Sauce article concerning this matter (897).

Brent Spar was a floating installation, rather like a giant buoy. In simple terms its anchor wires could be cut and the thing towed away. It only serves to confuse a complex issue for you to suggest with blissful ignorance that this is the case with all installations.

The real problem of disposal lies with fixed installations. These are built in stages in the field from modules constructed onshore, and are piled and concreted into the sea bed. You could liken towing them into deeper water to be dumped, to moving Canary Wharf to the other side of London. It could be done but at enormous expense. If one has a grasp of this simple concept it makes the whole issue much more interesting.

Regards,
DAVID A. ROBINSON,
Via email.

Follow suit

Sir,

Your cartoon (898), which appears to comment on messrs Brown and Mandelson's supposed sexuality, is both offensive and unfunny. Their sexuality, whatever it is, is their own affair unless they choose to declare otherwise. If you had focused on the gloomy and revisionist suits that they invariably wear that would of course have been an entirely different matter.

Yours sincerely,
KEITH FLETT,
Chief Measurer, Suits For Socialism.

Tiny minds

Sir,

For the second time you have made the crossword so small I need a spyglass, so here are two more small cross-words: "You bastards".

Yours squintingly,
RODNEY JONES,
Burton-on-Trent.

Voice recognition

Sir,

I wonder if any of your readers have noticed the remarkable resemblance between "I Am The Voice", the Irish 1996 Eurovision song contest winner and "The Whistler" from Jethro Tull's SONGS FROM THE WOOD *album circa 1977?*

Could they by any chance be related? I think Tull's Ian Anderson should be told!

Yours faithfully,
P. CLARKE,
Oldham, Lancs.

Sack fulls

Sir,

I cannot understand your organ's reservations towards the pruning achievements of Max "Hitler" Hastings as regards his staff. I read a copy of the EVENING STANDARD *earlier this week and, quite frankly, he isn't sacking enough of them.*

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES FOLKES,
Guildford, Surrey.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"30 minutes to go, and it's still 1-0 apiece."
COMMENTATOR, Scot-FM
(Donald Campbell)

"If you don't play them, the balls will never forgive you."
JOHN VIRGO, BBC2
(Paul Bateman)

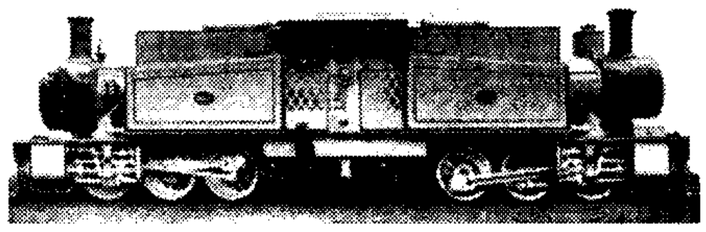
"The conditions at the Nurburgring are much better than last year's Grand Prix of Europe, when the weather conditions were indescribably bad: driving rain, heavy mist and bitter cold."
MURRAY WALKER, BBC2
(Keith Adams)

"Nineteen Kenyans started in that race — and they finished 1-2-3."
DAVID COLEMAN, BBC1
(Geoff Torry)

Ed Doolan: *What does a Venus Fly Trap catch?*
Caller: *Flies.*
BBC Radio WM
(Philip Bannister)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN



SIGNAL FAILURES

THE future for local rail services is as bleak now as in the 1960s, despite the growing traffic congestion on the roads.

In his 1963 report *The Reshaping of British Railways*, Richard Beeching wrote: "It is obvious that a high proportion of stopping passenger train services ought to be discontinued as soon as possible. It is not immediately apparent either, why it is thought that rail buses [early Sprinter-type trains] would give a better standard of service than a road bus."

Within a few years Beeching's calamitous error was realised. People were not willing to use buses instead of trains and bought cars when their local railways were closed. In the 1980s and 1990s our roads have become clogged with car traffic — 60 percent of it making journeys of *less than two miles* — and local authorities around the country have spent millions of pounds reopening nearly 30 lines and more than 200 stations which should never have been closed in the 1960s.

Beeching's error was to look only at the individual profit-loss account of each line; but at least some local services survived because they could be cross-subsidised by profitable express passenger trains. Now the government has stopped that cross-subsidy, creating for the first time ever express-train operators who couldn't give a toss what happens to the local network.

The new leaders of the rail industry are uncannily echoing Beeching. James Sherwood, now head of the East Coast mainline Intercity franchise, said in 1993: "There is little justification for provincial services. Frankly, buses are cheaper to provide those services. They will be axed before long." An advertisement this year for Stagecoach, which operates the South West Trains franchise, states: "The X5 coach is better placed to attract car users than any rail line. The railway... remains the 19th-century inflexible answer which it always was." The same two franchisees have already launched connecting bus services which undermine parallel local trains (see *Eye* 897).

The East Coast mainline has always connected with local services at nine different stations between Edinburgh and Peterborough. It seems Sherwood and his ilk will do all they can to cast off "connectional" responsibilities with the network, driving local services which depend on connections for much of their income further into the red.

WEST Coast mainline passengers will agree that privatisation is, as promised, bringing innovation.

One old-fashioned idea perpetuated by British Rail was that persistent delays to trains should be countered by efforts to make them run on time. On the new railway, if trains are late they're simply cancelled.

As the West Coast train operating company explains: "Due to the continuing engineering works at Euston some services have been cancelled in an attempt to avoid congestion, and therefore provide a more punctual service."

The fact that the West Coast operator gets it in the neck is of no interest to Railtrack, which now has its own shareholders to please. To do this Railtrack is also innovating — by replacing BR's stale old practice of maintaining the tracks so the trains can, er, keep running. Railtrack wouldn't allow engineers to inspect the condition of the tracks at Euston (see *Eye* 888) and wouldn't upgrade them even after an entire Waterman Railways train derailed. But, alas, the health and safety executive (HSE) has forced Railtrack to squander on maintenance some of the money being saved for dividends to the poor and needy shareholders.

Euston is, of course, the terminus of Britain's busiest line. Railtrack's reluctance to invest there is not a good omen for the Barrow to Carlisle, the Exeter to Barnstaple and countless other rural lines now governed solely by the lust for profits.

'Dr B. Ching'

FUNNY OLD WORLD

"Wouldn't it be wonderful to go into third world countries and say: 'listen, I know you guys only have one meal a week, but it doesn't matter, just re-programme'. If people in poor countries would only stop listening to the mass media, who keep telling them they will die without food, then they could learn to live entirely off liquid light, like I do."

Jasmuheen, the Brisbane author of *Prana & Immortality*, was lecturing in Hong Kong, where she hoped to attract new recruits to her Breatharian movement. "The human body was not designed to consume food, but rather light, which I call prana. I converted to light nourishment three years ago, after a gastronomic incident with a mollusc. Since that time I haven't had anything to eat, except an occasional nibble at a Hob Nob biscuit,

but I am never hungry and am perfectly healthy. My message is particularly helpful for teenage girls who are suffering from anorexia nervosa. The anorexics I've met have been absolutely ecstatic at the idea of living off liquid light, and are delighted to hear that Breatharians can give up food and water entirely, without any ill effects. Prana is the answer for the starving millions."

Eric Chan, a psychiatrist from Hong Kong University who attended the lecture, remarked afterwards: "Anorexics are notorious for not accepting they have a problem that needs treating. And they're also notorious for dying. Jasmuheen will not live much longer on a diet of prana and biscuits, Hob Nobs or otherwise." *(Eastern Express, 2/5/96. Spotter — George H. Adams)*

—o—

"Larceny is always irritating, but we were particularly baffled by these thefts," Ahmad Zaini Mohammed Amin, a senior official at Telekom Malaysia explained to a press conference in Sabah. "We began finding many severed telephone handsets down by the quayside. Eventually we discovered that fishermen had been stealing them."

Ahmad was explaining why the handsets in over 900 of TM's 3,500 payphones in Sabah (Borneo) had been stolen last year. "The local fishermen have discovered that, if they connect the handsets to batteries and lower them into the water, the electricity passing through the microphones produces an intermittent high-pitched sound that attracts fish straight into their nets. I don't know how they discovered this, though there is a rumour that it is in some way connected with a perverted sexual practice enjoyed by the fishermen. Apparently, the fish move to the rhythm of the tone, and it looks as though they're dancing. If we were manufacturers of fishing tackle we'd be delighted that our equipment works so well. But unfortunately we're a phone company, so it's a bit of a disaster." (Associated Press, 4/5/96. Spotter — Brendan Joseph O'Byrne)

—o—

"This isn't the first time that this couple have worked the astrology scam in Petersham," Constable Peter Monaci told reporters, "and the public should be wary of anyone who asks them to hand over large amounts of cash to have it blessed. It's usually unwise."

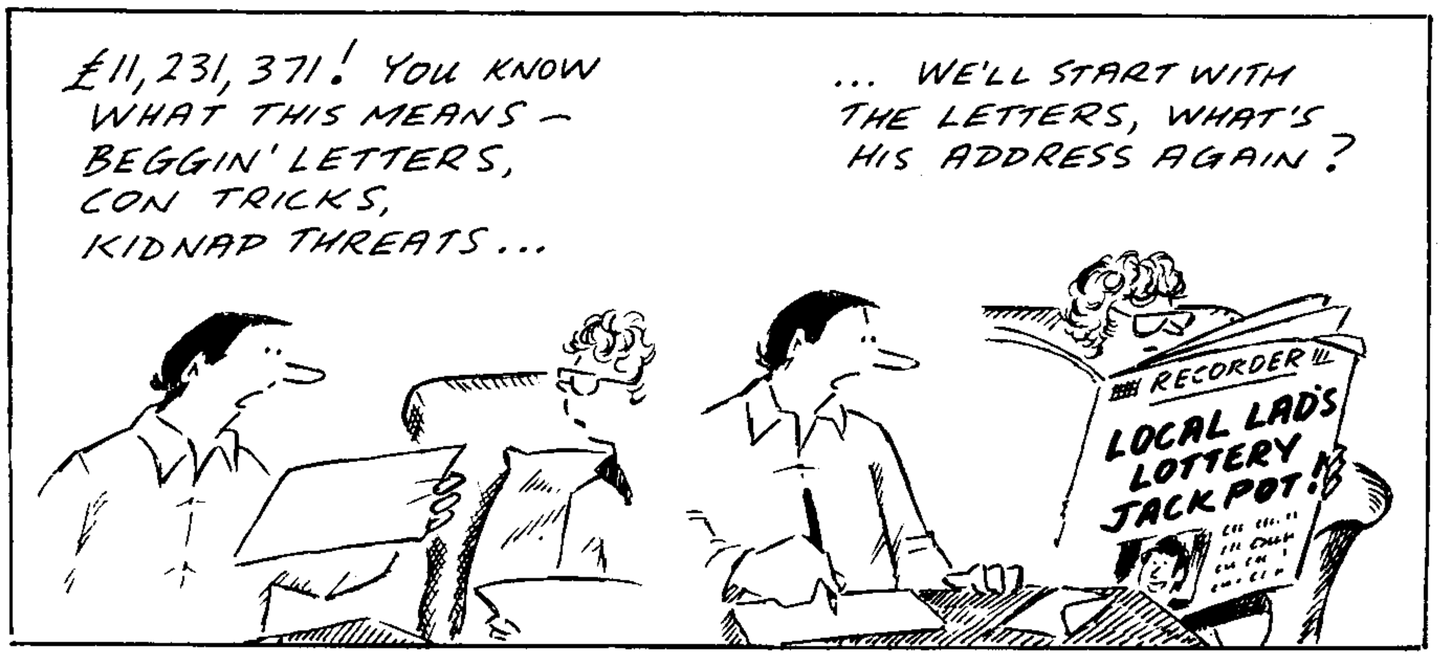
Earlier, he had explained to Australian reporters how the scam worked. "The couple, who we believe to be from Marrickville, claim to have supernatural powers, and an ability to bless money and make it grow. On this occasion, they persuaded a man from Croydon Park to put $100,000 in a cash box, and hand it over to them to be sanctified. They took it into the next room to bless it, and then returned, and gave the box back to him. They told him that he must on no account open the box until the year 2000, otherwise the magic would be destroyed, and he would go blind, his hair would fall out, he would get cancer, and die of a stroke. But after a fortnight, the man began to get suspicious, so he opened the box and found it was full of shredded paper. Strangely, he still blames himself, and thinks that opening the box prematurely was what turned his money into scrap. And funnily enough, he has started going bald." (Canberra Times, 18/4/96. Spotter — Margaret and Paul Wright)

Compiled by

Victor Lewis-Smith

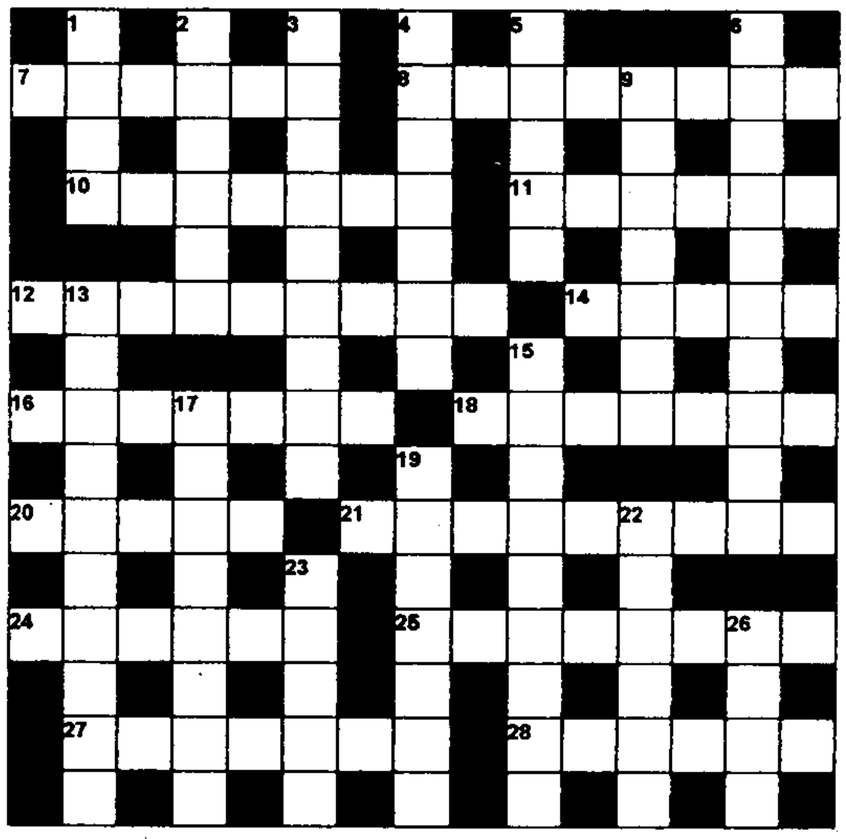
The Lottery Winners

TURNER


£11,231,371! YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS — BEGGIN' LETTERS, CON TRICKS, KIDNAP THREATS...
... WE'LL START WITH THE LETTERS, WHAT'S HIS ADDRESS AGAIN?
RECORDER
LOCAL LAD'S LOTTERY JACKPOT!

EYE CROSSWORD 54

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

7 MBE wasted on Roy, sadly lacking in development (6)
8 Sort of communication needed to give Major the boot? (4,4)
10 Shrink from arse-like youth on street (7)
11 Bill's second goal fixed — note to follow (2,4)
12/15 Bubbly, convivial — it's terrible what Prescott's become! (9,9)
14 Thick types see Claire Short's origins holding back party line (5)
16 Cause some excitement when one stupid bastard gets stuffed (7)
18 Minister's right about being gobbled by model (7)
20 Bath taken before s and m by jerk (5)
21 What's MI6 up to, given abnormal powers and indefinite period but getting no one back inside? (9)
24 Member heard to take crap — a unilateral decree (6)
25 Archer, legendary hero, FBI's scourge? Bullshit! (4,4)
27 Labour camp location for one repeatedly sabre-rattling (7)
28 Crap seats (6)

DOWN

1 Novel luvvy oscar winner (4)
2 The result of Margo's getting screwed? (6)
3 Major's unhappy lot to see name-dropping Blair embrace Right and rave? (4,5)
4 Producing a rag, making vulnerable Di tingle to some extent? (7)
5/26 Vatican codswallop? (5,4)
6 Now just a definitive danger signal as far as Blair and co. are concerned? (3,3,4)
9 Got the killer instinct? Go for it! (7)
13 Cult leader on a trip pokes model (4,6)
15 (see 12)
17 Take bath with balls pointlessly outside as an aid to making a baby? (4,4)
19 Somewhere to park your butt when roaming round hospital (7)
22 Portaloo fondly holds it up, not being stupid (2,4)
23 As everyone can see, to go is what Maggie refused to do! (1-4)
26 (see 5)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 07.06.96. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 53

Winner: Patricia White

ACROSS: 7 Riot Act 9 Oftel 10 Evoked 11 The Crown 12/29 Popular Front 14 Reefer 16 Arch 18 Piles 20 Snip 21 Hernia 23 Cantona 25 Underdog 28 Todger 29 (see 12) 30 Murdoch.

DOWN: 1 Privy purse 2 Cock-up 3 (see 6) 4 Poseur 5 Starkers 6/3 Slow handclap 8 Tat 13 Relic 15 Elizabeth R 17 Hanger-on 19 Senators 22 Audits 24 Old boy 26 Naff 27 Gym.

U.S. ELECTIONS

CLINTON TO HAVE BABY SHOCK

by Our Man in Washington **Mary Whitehouse**

PRESIDENT Clinton today announced that he and his wife Hillary Roberts Thatcher had decided to try and win the next election.

The couple said that they were delighted with the news and sources close to themselves told reporters, "All we need now is to decide what kind of baby would appeal most to American voters."

Mrs. Clinton then read out a list of possible names for the new Clinton baby and asked the public to phone in with their preferences.

THAT LIST

O.J. Clinton	Hiawatha Clinton
Speedy Gonzalez Clinton	Zsa Zsa Clinton
Big Mac Clinton	Gerry Adams Clinton
Madonna Clinton	Rabbi Clinton
Bruce Lee Clinton	Yasser Clinton
"Clint" Clinton	Nanook Clinton
Fred Flintstone Clintstone	Peregrine Worsthorne
Ivana Clinton	*(shurely shome mishtake)*

The Eye Says

In the middle of the Beef War started by the Germans *(who else?)* why oh why do we have to put up with a Kraut Anthem for *our* British European Football Championships?!!

Super-Hun Franz Adolf Beethoven is going to be rammed down our throat all summer with his unsingable goosestepping ode that no one understands — yes, it's Deutschland Über Alles no less!!

What's wrong with good old-fashioned patriotic British Beef *(surely 'composers'? Ed)*?!

Here is just a selection of the Eye's British songster squad that would make Boring Beethoven Roll Over in his grave!!

1. **Elgar**
2. **Elgar**
3. **Oasis**
4. **Blur**
5. **...Ur**
6. **Elg...ur**
7. **That's it**
8. **Take That**
9. **Cliff Richard**
10. **Peter Maxwell Davies**

Phone in now with the tune you want to sing as Terry's boys bomb out *(surely 'hold the trophy high'? Ed)*.

MUSIC FOR A MAY EVENING

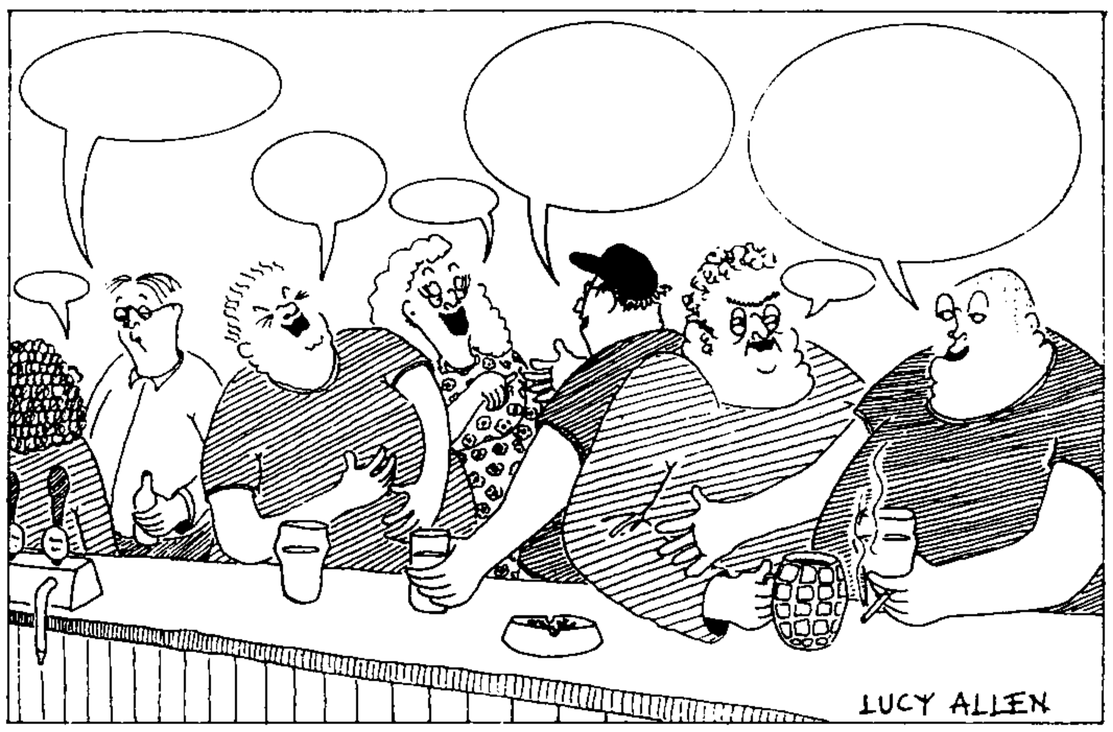
Tickets £3.50, children £1.50, to include glass of wine & nibbles from Margaret Frost (891321),

Corscombe Parish Magazine

Glenda Jackson MP

I QUITE enjoy it's spelling mistakes, and I miss the old punning headlines.

The Grauniad



FILM EXTRAS RELAXING

DANGEROUS MAN 'SHOULD BE RELEASED' SAY JUDGES

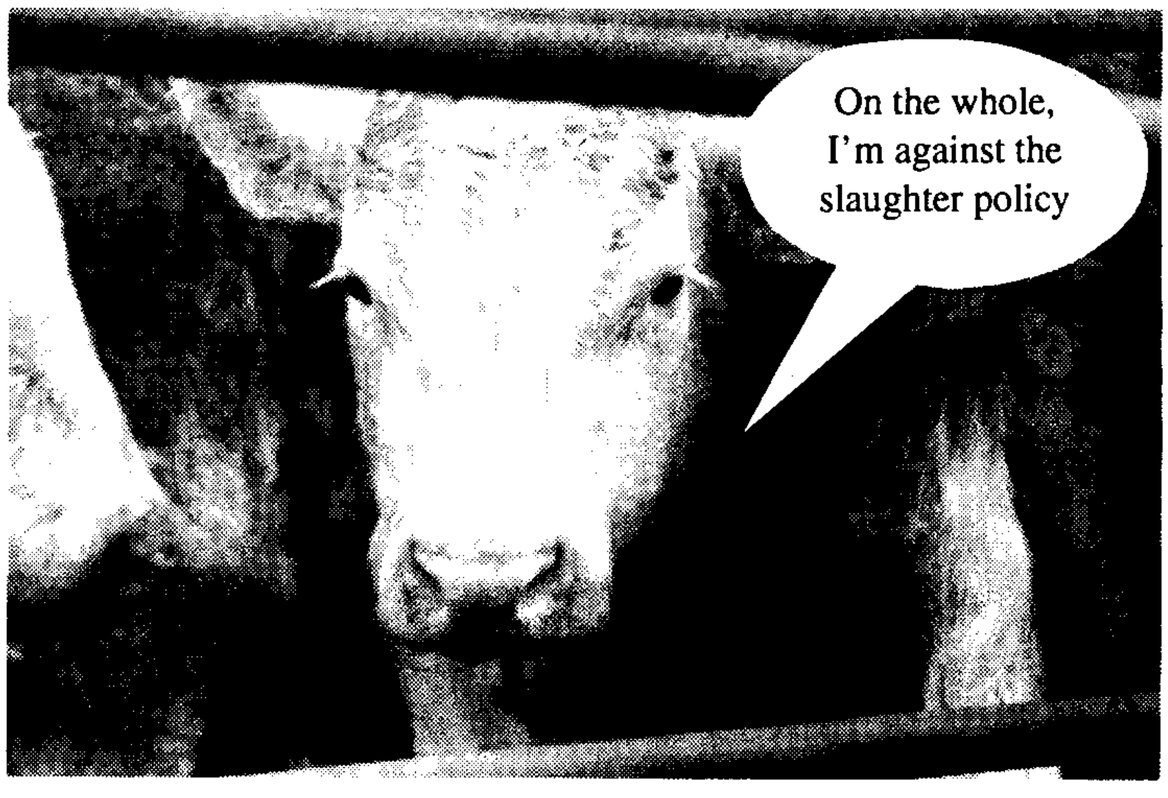
by Our Legal Staff **Joshua Rosenbeard**

BRITAIN's top judges today infuriated penal hardliners by insisting that in certain specific circumstances it was in society's interest to let known criminals free from their place of incarceration.

Said Lord Justice Taylor, speaking on BBC Dorset's "Does He Do Time?" show: "Take the case of Michael Howard. This man is clearly a menace to himself and to other people. He shows no sign of rehabilitation and in fact he is getting worse with every day that he spends locked up in the Home Office.

"Surely we can show a little compassion to people like Michael Howard and throw him out into the street as soon as possible."

SANE COW DISEASE



The Secret DAIRY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Monday

Today it was Mr Monsieur Chirac's turn to come to Britain to eat beef. First we arranged for him to do a number of other things, like review the British Army, ride around in a carriage and meet the Queen, but then came the really important bit when we invited him to lunch at Downing Street and showed him the menu. This time we had learned our lesson, oh yes. When Mr Herr Kohl came, he was offered English beef or Spanish fish, and he chose the fish. But this time the menu was as follows:

Boeuf Anglais
or
Beef Wellington
or
English Beef.
To follow:
Ice Cream and Gelatine Anglaise.

Mr Herr Chirac thanked me very much in perfect English, and said: "That is very kind of you, mon brave, but I have brought some fishpaste sandwiches." Obviously Mr Herr Kohl had warned him!

Tuesday

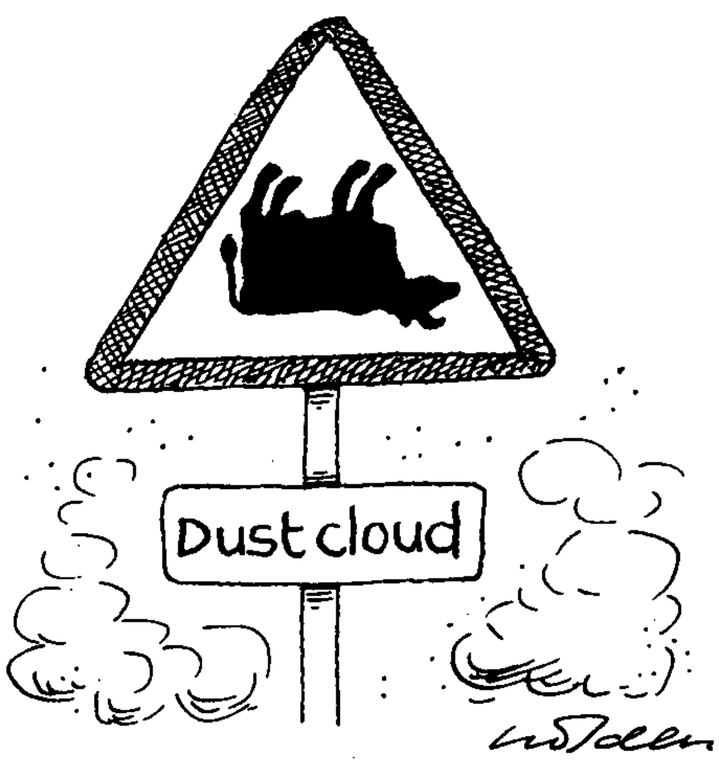
Mr Doctor Mawhinney has come up with a brilliant new slogan which will win us the next election and make everyone forget about beef. He has put up huge posters all over London reading "We Aren't Any Good But Vote For Us Anyway". He says it combines humour with humility, which is exactly what the voters want according to a survey done by one of our marketing firms, Fowler and Mellor Associates. Apparently, when people were asked what they thought of the government, 98 per cent said: "They are a complete joke, who ought to be begging our forgiveness for cocking everything up." It is good to see Mr Mawhinney on top of his job!

Wednesday

Today I had to go out to Ryman's to buy a special new book for the "Beef Bastards". This is all the Europeans who last night voted against me on the lifting of the ban on sallow, teamen and gelignite which are all made from beef. The first name in the book is Mr Herr Kohl who is the biggest bastard of all. He promised to vote for us and when it came to it, he didn't. What a bastard. I am now not inconsiderably totally furious with these foreigners. After all I have done defending them against Mrs Gorman and Mr Portaloo. I have decided after very careful thought that I am so angry that there is only one thing left to do. I am going to declare war on Europe, just like Mr Chamberlain did in 1939. I will not even have to ask Mr Heseltine's permission, since he is on a very important visit to China and has left me holding the fort while he is away.

Thursday

Today the House of Commons witnessed the most historic speech since Mr Churchill told the Europeans that we would fight them on the peaches. At precisely 3.17pm I stood up and said that Britain had had enough. "That is why," I said, "I have decided that, as of now, this country is officially in a state of non-cooperation with our European partners". There was a hushed silence at these historic words, broken only by a lone cheer from Mrs Teresa Gorman (note: I must take her name out of the Bastards Book — not my new Beef Bastards book, but the other one). Then Mr Blair stood up and as usual tried to catch me out by asking: "What exactly are you going to do?". "What a typically pathetic question," I responded, quick as a flash. "You are really pathetic to ask me that." This shut him up, and he immediately jumped up again with his in no small measure irritating smile and asked "So what are you going to do then?" "We are going to do nothing at all," I told him, "that is what non-co-operation means." Obviously my message got through to Mr Blair's supporters because they all began laughing, cheering and shouting "resign!" at Mr Blair.



Friday

Today we had one of our best Cabinet meetings since the Falklands crisis. This morning for the first time for years all the newspapers (even Labour papers like the Mail and the Telegraph) were solidly behind us. I decided to celebrate by going into our Cabinet meeting wearing a Union Jack waistcoat, which Mr Mawhinney had brought for me from a stall on Oxford Street. Much to my surprise, when I got into the Cabinet room, I found Mr Portaloo and Mr Rifkind were wearing them too — in fact everyone except Mr Waldegrave who was wearing his special Pop waistcoat from Eton and Mrs Bottomley who was wearing a National Lottery teeshirt bearing the slogan "Give Us Your Money and We'll Give It To Camelot". After we had sung Land of Hope and Glory, I told everyone that I was going to move into Mr Churchill's war bunker and would be directing the great Beef War (codenamed Operation Oxocube) myself. I would be appointing a special War Cabinet within the Cabinet, which would consist of everyone in the Cabinet except Mr Hogg, who cannot be trusted because he got us into this mess in the beginning. In his place I have appointed my new friend Mr Freeman as Supreme Commander of Allied Forces (Beef). Trying to be difficult, as usual, Mr Clarke asked me who our allies were. I immediately snapped back: "What a pathetic question. You are really pathetic, worse than Mr Blair." This really showed them all that I am a strong leader who will not be messed around by anybody, whether European, or in the Cabinet. To make my point, I ordered Mr Waldegrave to go out at once to get himself a patriotic waistcoat like everyone else, except Mrs Bottomley.

All The Moos Fit To Print

Daily Mail

FRIDAY, MAY 31, 1996

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 35p

The Paper That Supports Our Cows

YES, IT'S WAR AT LAST

By Our Entire Staff
JING O'BOOZE and JOHN BULL-SEMEN

AT last the moment all true Britons have been waiting for has arrived.

At 3.32 yesterday afternoon Mr John Major told an expectant nation: "This country is now at war with Germany. And Portugal, Finland, Austria, Luxembourg, Italy and a number of others."

As the news broke, church bells rang out and millions of young men rushed to recruiting stations in order to sign up for the chance of killing 3 million cows *(surely 'foreigners'? P.D.)*.

Keep The Home Cows Burning

Outside Buckingham Palace vast crowds gathered, waving union jacks and singing "Ooh, ah, Cantona" and other anti-European slogans in a spontaneous display of enthusiasm for the Third World War they said could never happen.

Meanwhile in his bunker prime minister Neville Majorlain waited for the end *(surely 'beginning'? P.D.)*.

We'll Meat EU Again

Earlier the prime minister Mr John Chamberpot had told a packed House of Commons: "I asked for a number of assurances from the German Chancellor Herr Kohl that he had no more territorial demands as regards British semen, tallow and gelatine.

"It is my duty to tell the House that I received those assurances, and then the bastard went back on his word.

"That is why I have had no alternative but to declare war *(surely 'general election'? P.D.)*."

Major's War Plan In Full

BRITISH officials will immediately launch a blitzkrieg campaign of non-cooperation on the following issues:

1. Next Tuesday's top-level Euroclip meeting to discuss the harmonisation of the standard European paperclip.

2. Next month's key discussions on the proposed Council Decision 96/432 on rules governing the exporting of cat litter to Outer Mongolia.

3. At next month's Florence summit the prime minister will just sit there and not eat any biscuits during the morning coffee break.

4. Er...

5. That's it.

Daily Mail COMMENT

Our position on the BSE crisis has been entirely consistent.

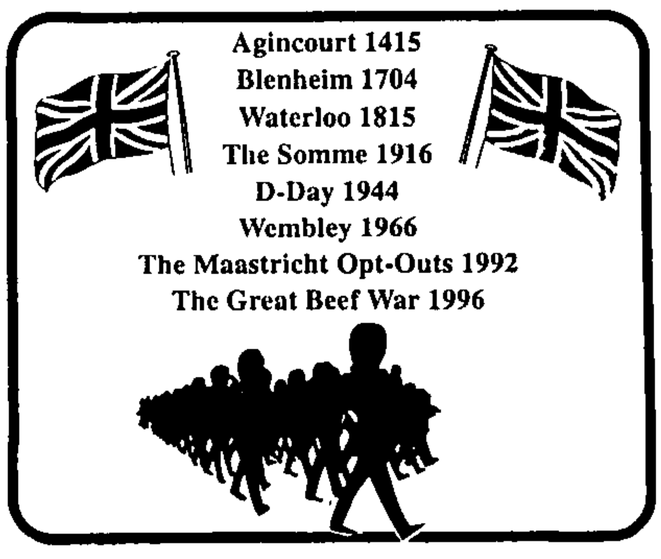
First we told you that BSE was the worst killer disease since the Black Death.

Then we told you that the whole thing had been got up by hysterical members of the Labour Party just trying to score cheap party points.

Finally we told you that the whole BSE disaster was all the fault of the European Union, ie the Krauts, the Frogs, the Wops and the Dagoes.

Make no mistake about it — this paper is in the front line of the fight to sell newspapers.

Free Daily Mail War Poster Listing Britain's Glorious Victories Over Europe



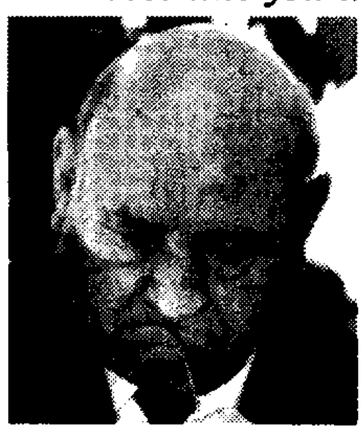
"If It Moos, Shoot It."
Motto of Hogg's Contemptible Little Army 1996

THE SUN SAYS

Who do you want to bring down the Government?

NOW that John Major's majority is down to one, it will only take one man (or woman) to end his government.

You choose who you would like it to be:



Sir George Gardeners-Questiontime, 98. Fanatical Thatcherite, who would like to bring the government down because they won't re-select him as an MP.

Sir Richard Noddy, 112. Fanatical farmer, who wants to bring down the government because the EU stole all our fish.

Mrs Teresa Gorblimey, 97 (reduced to 25 on HRT). Fanatical Essex girl, who wants to bring down John Major for calling her a bastard.

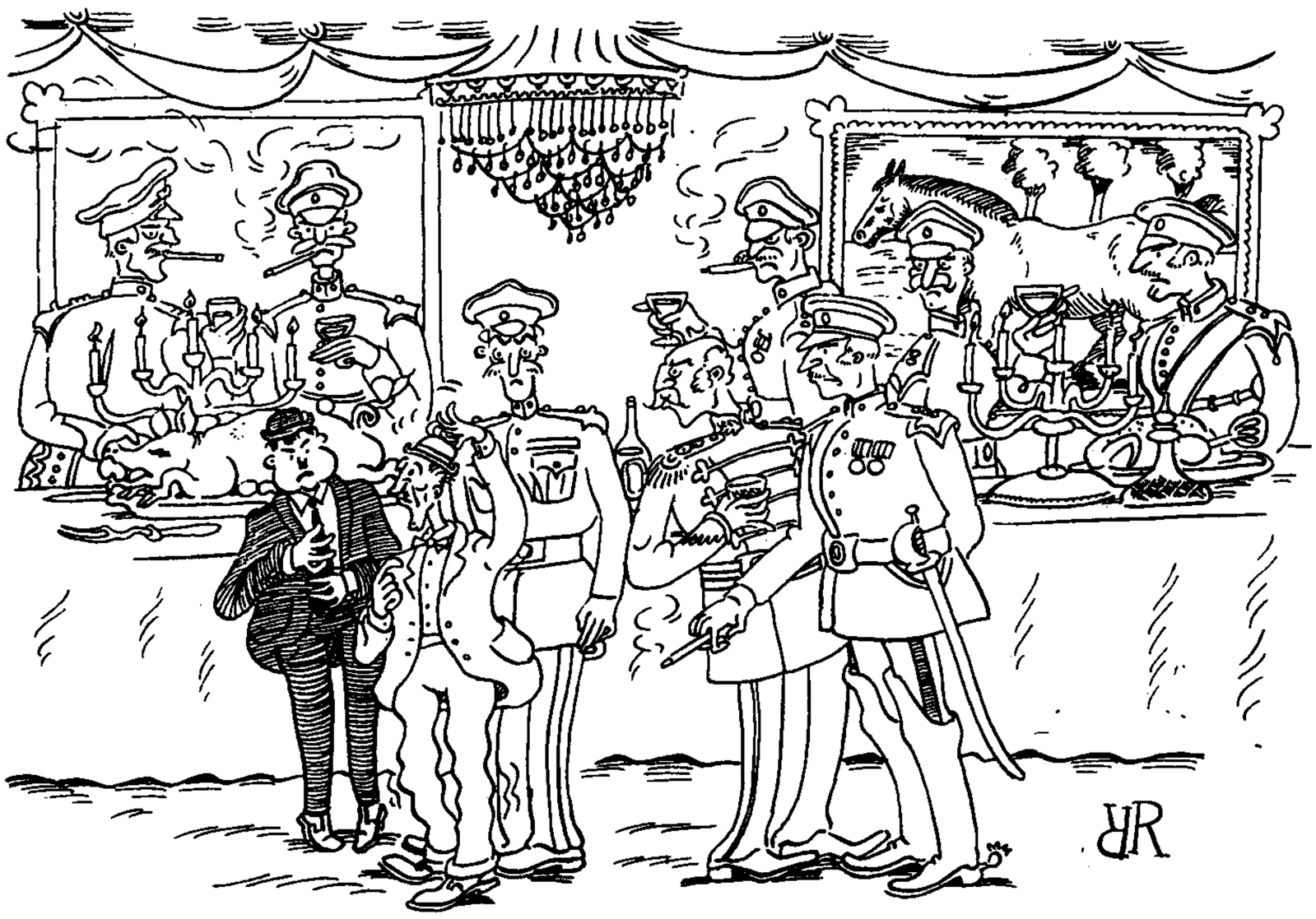
Sir George Walnut, 105. MP for Punch. Fanatical anti-Thatcherite who wants to bring down the government to get his name in the papers.

Mr David Trimblebore, 29. Fanatical fanatic, who wants to bring down the government for being soft on terrorism and talking to Gerry Adams.

Mr Gerry Adams, 41. Fanatical peace-lover and world statesman, who wants to bring down the government by blowing it up.

Ring with your preference on 0898 980809890

(calls charged at 43p a second on-peak, 82p Mercury off-peak)



"Well, Stanley? This looks like another fine mess you've gotten us into..."

Poetry Corner

Lines On The Departure Of Paul Gambaccini From Radio 3

So. Hooray
Then. *(Surely 'Farewell Then'? Ed.)*

Paul Gambaccini.

Ex-Presenter of
Morning Collection.

"And now another
Hit from
Gustav Mahler
As featured in
The classic movie
Death In
Venice
Starring Dirk
Bogarde."

That was one
Of your
Catchphrases.

My friend
Keith has suggested
That Haydn's
Farewell Symphony
Could be included
In your last broadcast.

But it has
Not been in
Any films.

As far
As I know.

D.J. Thribb (17½)

Postscript

Lines On The Death Of Mr Jon Pertwee

So. Farewell
Then Jon
Pertwee.

Who he?

He Who.

Dr E.J. Thribb (17½)

WORLD OF SOCCER

GUINNESS MAN TO BUY NEASDEN?

THE soccer world was rocked to its foundations by the announcement that Mr Ernest "Guinness" Saunders has offered to buy the ailing North Circular Relegation League side, Queen's Park Neasden.

By Our Man On The Terraces With A Bootleg Video Of "Best Night" And Ten Pounds' Worth Of Instants.

Mr Ron Knee, 57, the ashen-faced manager of the club, welcomed the bid.

"Mr Saunders is an ideal candidate to pull on the coveted Chairman's suit," he said. "He has all the qualifications that a club like Neasden needs, ie he is a convicted criminal. Most of my lads have already had the pleasure of meeting Mr Saunders at Ford and they are looking forward to seeing him again, especially Pevsner who says he owes him five quid."

Neasden Is Good For You

The Neasden fans (Sid and Doris Bonkers) are also in favour of having a top class ex-convict to sit in the boardroom. Said Sid:

"Today's game is a tough one and we need someone in the directors' box who is not scared of playing hard and bending the rules a bit when he needs to.

"Ernest is the chairmen's equivalent of Vinnie Jones."

Own Gaol

Last night Mr Saunders was asked whether he had indeed bid for Queen's Park Neasden. He told reporters:

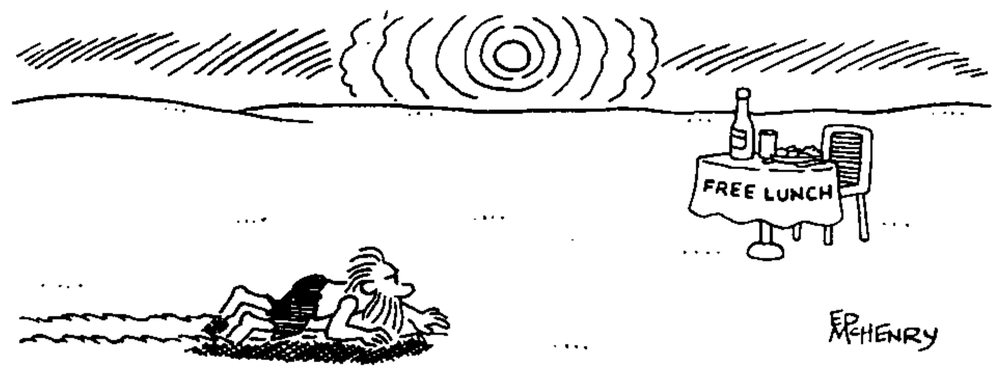
"I may have done, but as you know I suffer from occasional Alzheimer's Disease, so I have probably forgotten all about it."

LATE SCORE

Euro '96 Pre-Tournament Friendly

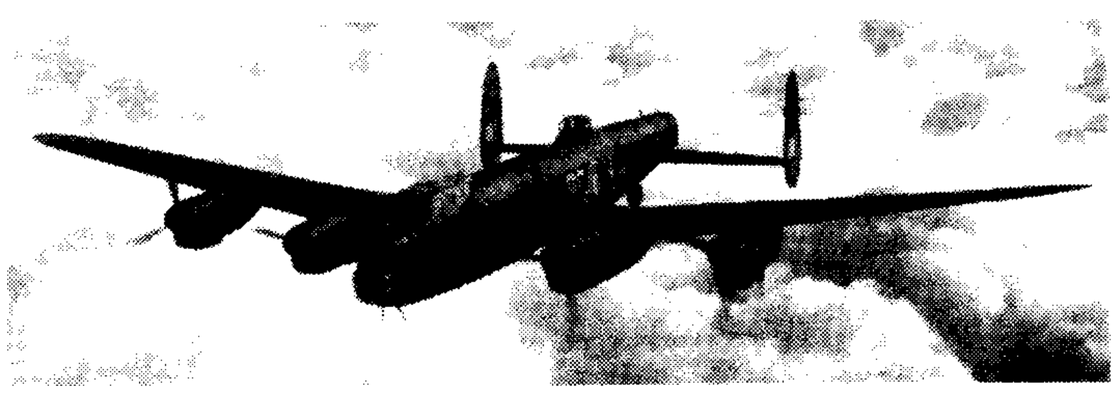
Neasden FC 0

Racing Club of Rekjavik 3
(Magnusson, Magnussonson, Magnussonsonson)



Daily Gnome

CLASSIC FILM COLLECTION



THIS week you can walk into your local Fags Mags 'n' Video Emporium (prop. Mr Patel) and come out with a really terrible old film.

All you have to do is ask Mr Patel for a copy of the Saturday Gnome or the Gnome on Sunday and he will give you free of charge (£3) one of the world's worst videos:

This week:

"They Flew to Bruges" (1947)

The first and greatest of all the Bruges movies, it tells the story of the daring wartime raid on Leipzig that went so tragically wrong. Starring **David Niven** as Flight Lieutenant "Pip" Pipplingham, **John Mills** as Gunner "Chalky" Chalkingham and **Yvonne Arnaud** as beautiful resistance leader "Françoise" Francingham. Directed and produced by legendary duo, **Zimmerburger** and **Parker-Bowles**, with stirring music by Sir **William Walnut**. *(Black and white. 67 minutes.)*

That British History Poll in full

1. **In what year was 1066? Was it:**
a) 1939?
b) 55 BC?
c) Eric Cantona?

2. **Was Thomas Chippendale, the famous 18th century furniture maker:**
a) a male stripper?
b) the inventor of fish 'n' chips?
c) a character in *EastEnders*?

3. **What is Goose Green?**
a) a single by Oasis?
b) a shade of paint by Dulux?
c) a character in *EastEnders*?

4. **How ignorant are British schoolchildren of their history?**
a) Big Mac?
b) Blur?
c) Eric Cantona?

RAYNSFORD, Nick (Lab, Greenwich)
2. Consultant on housing matters to HACAS; housing consultants. Occasional articles for journals and miscellaneous broadcasting fees, etc. 6. 3 June 1995, to Barcelona, to soak at the conference of the Building Merchants Federation.

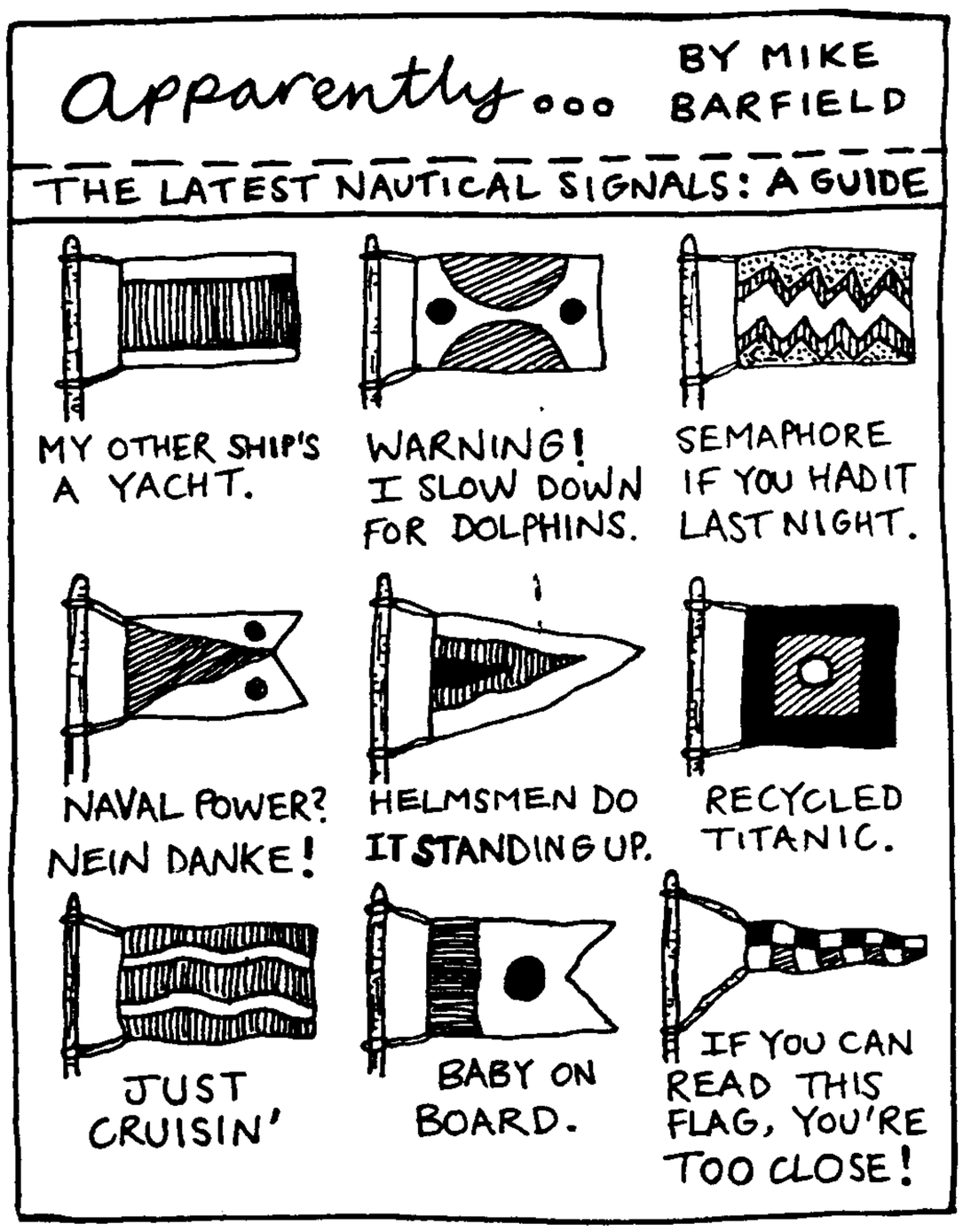
Daily Telegraph

"She often went out clubbing her friends.

Daily Mirror

A spokesman said Cunard was confident the nightmare in 1994 would be repeated, when hundreds of contractors were still on board carrying out remedial work as the *QE2* set sail after her German refit.

The Independent


apparently... BY MIKE BARFIELD
THE LATEST NAUTICAL SIGNALS: A GUIDE
MY OTHER SHIP'S A YACHT.
WARNING! I SLOW DOWN FOR DOLPHINS.
SEMAPHORE IF YOU HADIT LAST NIGHT.
NAVAL POWER? NEIN DANKE!
HELMSMEN DO IT STANDING UP.
RECYCLED TITANIC.
JUST CRUISIN'
BABY ON BOARD.
IF YOU CAN READ THIS FLAG, YOU'RE TOO CLOSE!

2 groats

Ye Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

The Paper That Supports Our Lorde

Free Ethelburger and Chips with every copy sold

Ye Row Grows Over Ye Millennium Projects

by Ye Venerable Deedes

Maketh no mistake — ye yeare of Our Lorde 1000 is going to be an tremendous floppe, if ye sources close to His Majesty King Ethelred-Ye-Unready-For-Ye-Millennium are to be believed.

Among ye projects which are considerably behind schedule are:

- *Ye plan to build the world's largest haystack on ye bank of ye Thames for ye toddlers to jump off (to be known as ye Bouncie Haystack).*
- *A Grand Roasting of Oxen involving ye incineration of all English cowes, to comply with ye banne imposed by Ye Holy Roman Empire (Emperor Helmut the Fat, prop.).*
- *Grand Exhibition of Ye Latest Dance Craze from Hibernia — Ye Riverdance.*
- *Ye Ceremonial Invasion of Britain by Duke William of Normandie.*

Ye sceptics are saying that none of these events will come to pass, and ye folke of England will be left to celebrate the historic year 1000 only by ye ende of ye worlde (admission free).

IN THE COURTS

Regina v. Oyston Ostrich

Judge's Summing Up

Mr Justice Cocklecarrot *(for it is he)*: Members of the jury, you have heard the evidence in perhaps the most shocking case of *rapine magnatum* that it has ever been my pleasure to preside over. You have heard the sorry tale of how Mr Oystereyes, a self-confessed multi-millionaire and supporter of the Labour Party — not a crime in itself, unfortunately *(Sycophantic laughter from barristers)* — took Miss B, a "model", into a motor vehicle and inflicted upon her a gross sexual act so horrendous in its detail that we had to spin it out for three days. The accused, you may think, then took this sensitive, innocent young model to his palatial home, where further lascivious and degrading acts took place, culminating, you may think, as I expect you will, in an act of first degree criminal rape. It may be the case that the accused did not threaten Miss B, nor did he use any violence against her. Yet, however, it is clear that, having lain down on the bed with no clothes on, she did everything she could to escape his evil clutches. But he was insatiable. Shamelessly, you may think, because I do, he flaunted his wealth, his age, his beard and his silly hat in a heartless and grotesque attempt to rape her. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, you must weigh up in your mind whether Mr Owen Eyesore is, as he claims, just a seedy old crook who likes a bit of slap and tickle with the employees of his escort agency, or whether as I submit you will find, he is the most dangerous serial rapist this country has seen in the entire history of the world. Would you now retire, as I should, and find the prisoner guilty. Or, as you may choose, guilty.

Usher: Hear, hear.

(Hundreds of models in gallery cheer, and sell "My Naughty Night With Rapist Oyston" to the tabloids)

SUNDAY EXPRESS MAN WINS TRIBUNAL

by Our Media Staff **Grey Lubianka**

AN elderly Sunday Express staffer has scored a historic victory over his young editor, Sue Douglas-and-Win.

At an industrial tribunal, the long-serving Sunday Express regular complained that he was victimised on account of his "age and gender".

Mr Rupert Bear, 57, told the tribunal: "She didn't want white-haired old boys hanging around her newspaper. I was given an hour to clear my strip and leave the page."

Miss Sue Douglas-and-Win defended her actions by saying that: "Mr Bear's dismissal occurred purely as a result of his incompetence in dealing with the issues of Nutwood. It had nothing to do with him being a terrific old bear *(shurely 'bore'? Ed.)*."

Said Mr Bear as he celebrated his £100,000 victory with a glass of champagne:

"It was unfair to treat me so,
The readers will be the next to go!"

"It's worse than I thought — they've got road rage"

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

AT THE JERRY HALL SHOOT:
IT'S GREAT TO BE IN VOGUE
YOU'RE NOT
DAVID BAILEY
OTHERWISE YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO STRIP OFF TO GET SOME PUBLICITY!
CLICK!

MASS HOGG SLAUGHTER

by **Lunchtime O'Bse**

IN A desperate bid to retrieve consumer confidence in the government over the current outbreak of Mad Conservative Disease, the Prime Minister last night ordered the culling of one Hogg.

The slaughter of this pathetic creature is widely predicted to impress no one at all, least of all the EU.

EUROVISION BEEF CONTEST

British entry scores 'nul points'

by Our Cowbiz Correspondent **Simon Heifer**

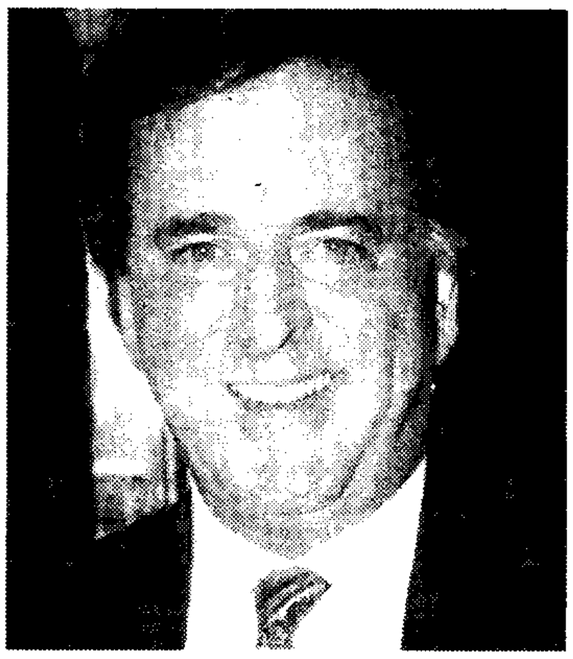
EUROVISION Beef judges last night gave a resounding thumbs-down to the British entry, performed by Douglas Hogg and Tony Baldry.

The song *Boom-Ban-A-Ban*, written by Chief Vet Keith Meldrew, failed to score any points at all from the European judges.

The voting for the British entry was as follows:

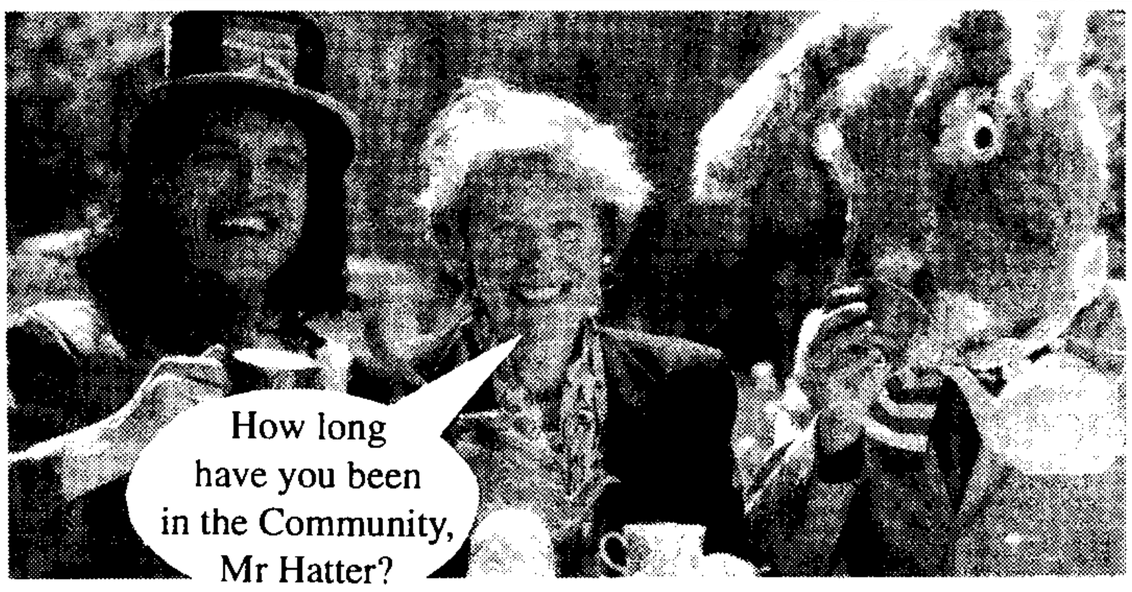
Germany: Hullo, Terry, we are here. And this is what the Germans think of your British beef. Zero. Keine punkt. For you, Terry, ze contest is over.

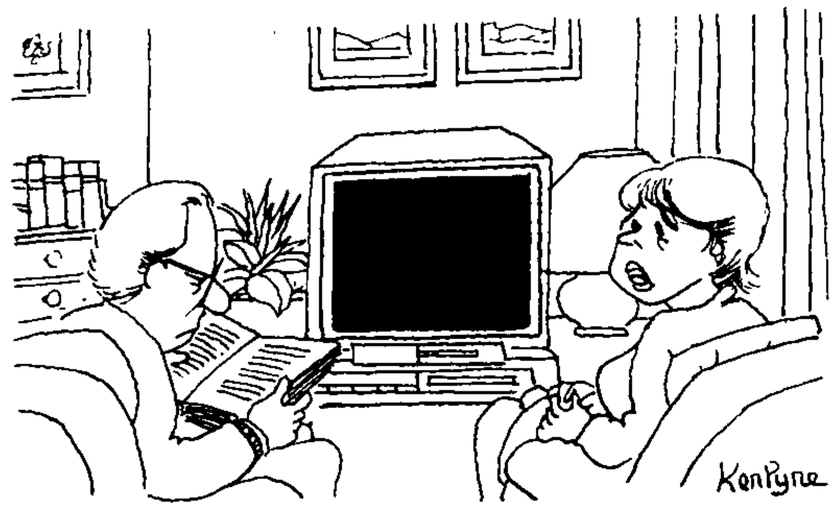
Finland: Hallo Terry. Yes, it's raining here in Helsinki,. And also snowing. I'm afraid no points for Britain at all. Bye-bye Terry.



Portugal: Buenos noches, Señor Wogan. And no points from Portugal also. We are not mad, like you English, eating the beef...

(That's enough nul points. Ed.)





"But we must watch something – it's peak viewing time!"

TV HIGHLIGHTS

Inside The SAS

(ITV, Thursday)

An extraordinary behind-the-scenes look at the activities of the SAS — the Special Airtime Squadron.

This is the story of the elite troops who at a moment's notice jump into the schedules and take on the awesome might of the BBC's repeats of *Absolutely Fabulous*.

The SAS are trained in all aspects of media warfare: novel writing, faction, dramatic reaction and even fly-on-the-wall documentary.

For the first time we are told the heroic stories of how they battled to make as much money as possible and fought each other over top billing.

These men are deadly boring and are trained to kill time for hours on end.

Their motto "Which camera am I on, love?" sends a chill down any viewer's spine.

Rating: One to miss.

Call My Agent *(shurely 'Bluff'? Ed)*

(BBC Daytime)

Return of the popular parlour game originally dropped because everyone was sick of it. Viewers have to guess the meaning of obscure words like "Coren".

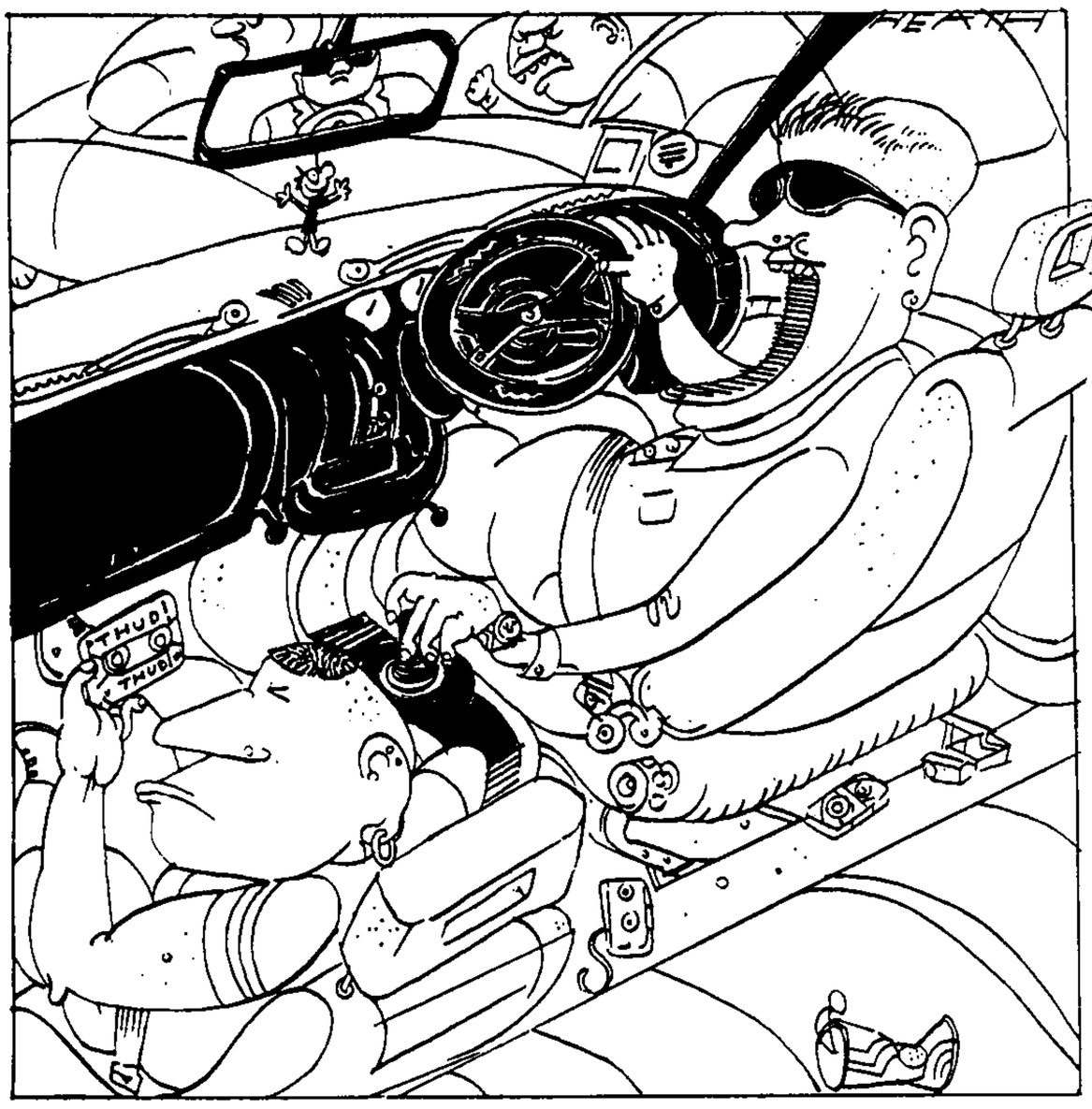
Is it a type of hat? Or a very, very long whimsical column in the Times?

Or is it in fact a verb, derived from the Swedish "corenjee-boom", meaning "to appear on television when no one is watching"?

And there's more. What does "Toksvig" mean? And who or what is a "Holness"? *(We get the idea. Ed.)*

Great Bores Of Today.

"... what's it coming to when you can't even drive along minding your own business without some madman trying to murder you for something he thinks you've done? I mean people are now going ape my mate was spat at by some bloke in a van he was just waiting at the lights signalling right and the driver in the transit went mental the idea that the highway code is going to stop it just by telling people to relax... how can you relax when some nutter is coming at you with a crowbar? no it's unbelievable last week some woman swore at me just for parking not doing anything innocently parking I mean they've got to bring in some law to stop all this who are you looking at you miserable git? wait 'til we get to the roundabout and I'll sort you mate..."



DIARY

GORE VIDAL

AS I once said to the late Jack Kennedy, brushing my hand with due caution yet infinite tenderness against his inner thigh: "The publishing industry must take the blame for all these wretched books". Ambulate elegantly into a public library, accepting with a dignified flourish of the well-manicured hand the applause of passers-by, and what is it that confronts one? Books, books, and yet more books.

James Joyce, archbore Irishman; Jane Austen, beskirted miniaturist; Henry James, pot-bellied obscurantist; William Wordsworth, grubby-fingered horticulturalist; George Eliot, flat-chested moraliser; William Shakespeare, AC/DC Midlands thespian: it saddens me to say I have never managed to wade to the end of any of their no doubt immensely — one might venture to say *grindingly* — distinguished works.

The continued publication of these dogged dullards raises fascinating questions about the publishing "industry", as it chooses to term itself. Contrast the massed sales of these authors the world over with the pitiful circulation of my own, somewhat more sparky output. Gore Vidal sells poorly in Germany, Austria, Spain, Portugal and Scandinavia, precious little in Greece, Turkey and points east. And for the past few years the citizens of Yugoslavia have been forced to undergo the pain of finding *no Vidal whatsoever* in their bookshops. Small wonder they look so horribly — as Wallis Windsor might have put it — boo-hooey.

But there is, as I found cause to remark in characteristically aphoristic mood to the feminine but nonetheless quirkily attractive Eleanor Roosevelt, a reason for everything.

So what, one might ask, is the reason behind the universal conspiracy against sales of my collected works? I know from a long-time associate of Henry Kissinger that it is to be located deep in the heart of the CIA, in union with the all-powerful Firearms Lobby of the USA and the combined might of the war-machine, the Mafia, the Pentagon and a top secret anti-Vidal committee of the United Nations, headed by the notoriously slack-buttocked Deng Xiaoping.

Money, that most omnivorous of commodities, is in charge once more: by diverting the fortune that would otherwise have been spent on my novels, essays and memoirs straight into the international war machine, the governments of the world hope to coax their citizens into paranoia and xenophobia, and thus to support them in their battle for re-election. Informed accounts suggest the innocent Mr Lee Harvey Oswald had entered the Dallas Book Pound that fateful day simply to borrow my recently-published "Julian"; and look what happened to him.

My antecedents, seasoned aristocrats all, were the founders of what we are now pleased to describe, in our impishly ironic way, as The Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave. My great-grandfather, Senator Bore Vidal of New York, the owner of two hundred thousand acres of prime farming land east of Buffalo, married my great-grandmother Edwina Crashing, the daughter of Amelia Crashing, whose father was one of the Wilds of Montana, giving birth to my grandfather, Senator Wild Crashing Bore, who in turn married Miss Gore Blimey from one of the most influential aristocratic families in London's gorgeously affluent Hackney East. From their union sprang, with, I regret to say, more promptitude than pulchritude, the Hon. Mrs Bore V. Dull of Oklahoma, who then gave birth to a famously talented son, Gore V. Dull, later to become better known as Gore Vidal, now widely respected as the nation's foremost novelist, social commentator and historian.

On my father's side, I am related to Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Jefferson, neither of them inconsiderable figures in the political arena, though one must learn, I suppose, to overlook their deficiencies in the facial hair department. On the military side, my distinguished great-great grandfather General Gore L. Vidal was at Custer's side at The Battle of Little Big Horn. Many believe it to have been General Gore's personal message of encouragement to the troops ("TO THE FIRST MAN WHO GETS OUT OF HERE ALIVE, A FREE SHAMPOO AND SET") that swung the balance in that least dainty of skirmishes. In turn, General Gore's great-nephew, Sassoon Vidal, the founder of the first literary salon, emerged as the major poet of the 1st World War, no anthology complete without his moving lines: "The shells burst all about us/Spraying mud o'er our uniforms/Clean on this bleak morn".

My English critics have attempted to ignore the illustrious and influential pedigree from which I so deftly sprang. But then no-one of any breeding cares any more about that inconsiderable little offshore isle, sinking beneath the weight of its own — how shall I put it? — snobbery.

It requires no uncanny knowledge of the human heart to figure out that the Christian "religion", if one can still call it that, has had, as it were, its day.

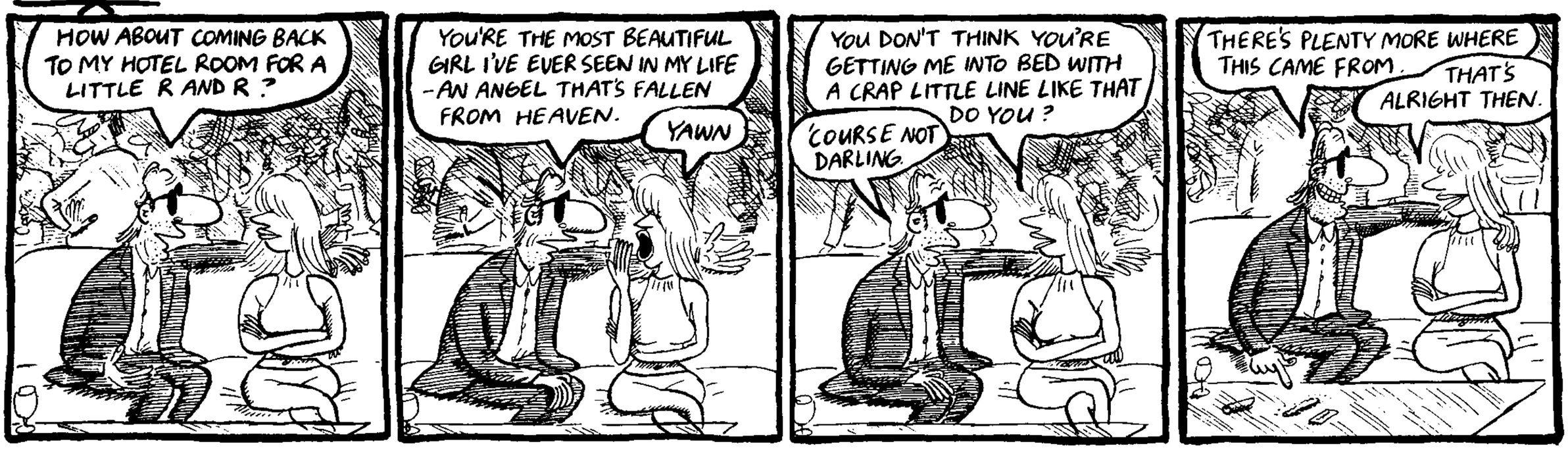
From the unhygienic Joseph through the ill-assorted fish-filleters, so many of them called Simon or Andrew, right the way through to those dreary and unseasonably bewooled baa-lambs for whom the Good Lord reserved such an inexplicably soft spot in his squeaky-clean heart, the assorted personages in the New Testament make for unattractive companions.

As I indicated as early as 1951 to my old friend, the over-promoted Jack Kennedy, Christianity is a pastime that is most unlikely ever to catch on. At that point, incidentally, Jack turned to me, chuckled, "Gore, you are this nation's one true genius", gave me the most delicate peck on my cheek, and turned back to the job in hand, which necessarily involved a youthful representative of the female community, complete with the obligatory appendages and protrusions of her species.

How much more sensible, I would venture, to found a religion upon someone altogether more worthy of adoration. My own faith requires little more than a mirror, a blow-drier and the merest touch of Estee Lauder navy-blue eye-liner. I worship three or four times a day, for up to five hours at a time. The object of my worship has never let me down, growing ever more divine with each kiss blown, gently salivating in the reciprocation of our mutual esteem. Toujours l'amour; toujours Gore.

Celeb

LIGGER


HOW ABOUT COMING BACK TO MY HOTEL ROOM FOR A LITTLE R AND R ?
YOU'RE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL I'VE EVER SEEN IN MY LIFE -AN ANGEL THAT'S FALLEN FROM HEAVEN.
YAWN
YOU DON'T THINK YOU'RE GETTING ME INTO BED WITH A CRAP LITTLE LINE LIKE THAT DO YOU ?
'COURSE NOT DARLING.
THERE'S PLENTY MORE WHERE THIS CAME FROM.
THAT'S ALRIGHT THEN.

Literary Review

Matthew, Mark, Luke and Jones

In the Blood: God, Genes and Destiny
Steve Jones
(HarperCollins, £20)

STEVE JONES was invented in 1991 when he gave the Radio 4 Reith Lectures. Until then he was virtually unknown, save presumably to those who gave him the job. These talks on "The Language of the Genes" turned out to be a great success, virtually the only Reith Lectures to have made an impact in recent memory.

They were hardly the product of genius and Jones was merely popularising the recent advances in genetics as a whole. However, although his speech was curiously robotic, his writing was lucid and the editors fell upon him with delight. Few scientists have any journalistic flair (while the science journalists on most papers know strangely little science), so ever since there has been a huge demand for the services of Professor Jones.

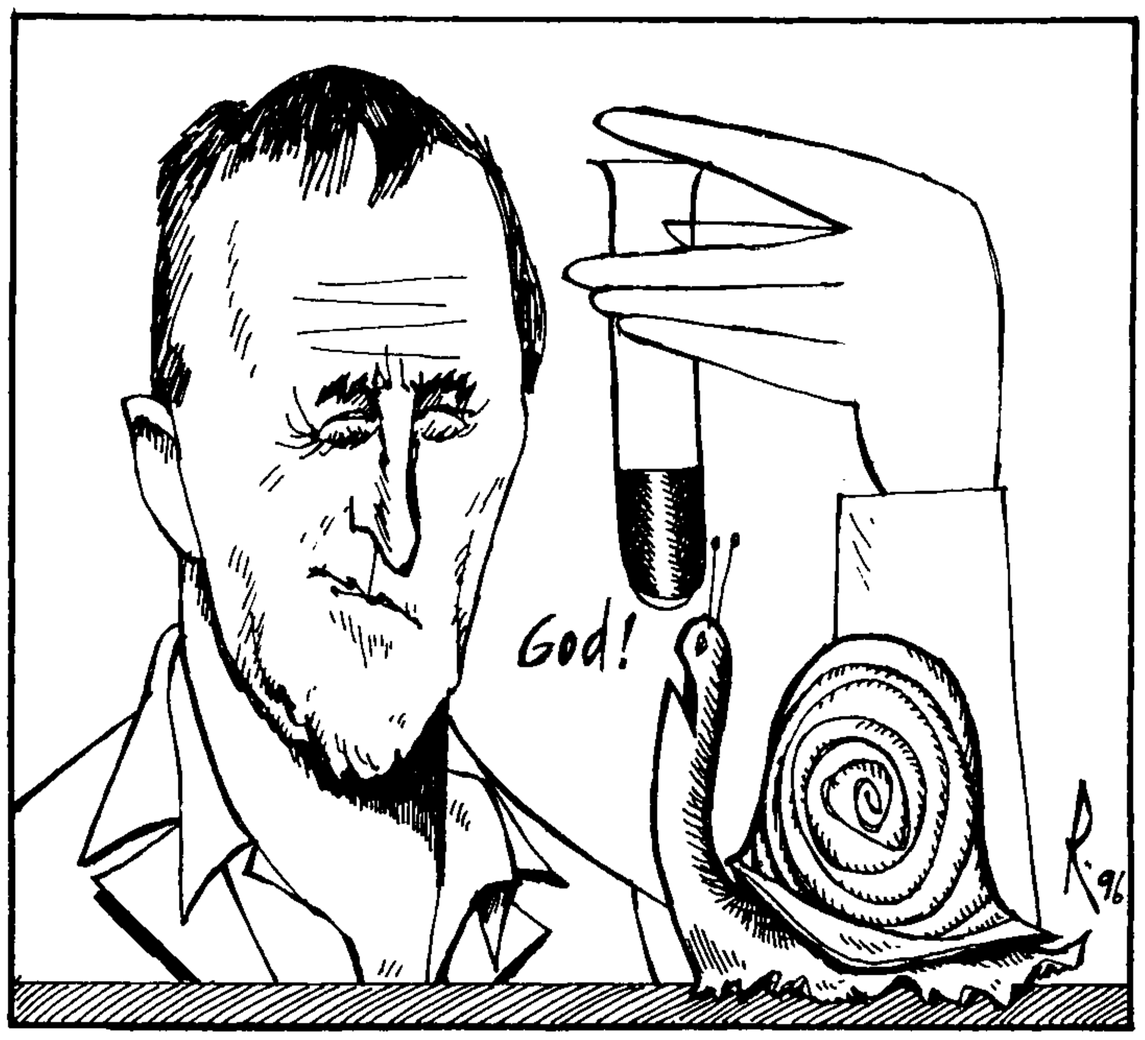
The result has been to swell his head enormously. With his pal, Richard Dawkins, he has become the prime example of the media scientist who believes that his knowledge in one area has made his opinions on every question equally valuable.

Since Melvyn decided it was smart to appear interested in science, there's one of them in every bout of *Start the Week*. After they've advertised their book or programme, you have the pleasure of hearing them pronounce on every other topic (in fact, nearly always the wickedness of the Tories) with a blithe assumption that even if the subject isn't scientific, they themselves still are, in a general sort of way.

Such conceit has always been around in one form or another. Bishops used to have it, and lords. Now, however, it's a speciality of a certain sort of scientist. Although their individual contributions to the advance of science may have been tiny or non-existent, they assume all the credit of the discipline as a whole. For the most part secretly, they believe that the opinions of non-scientists are pointless, not worth considering any more, utterly abolished by progress.

Dawkins has an unfortunate habit of saying this quite explicitly, not to mention rudely, about, for example, anybody who is in any way religious. Jones is slyer. He carefully ties his pronouncements on "the questions asked by philosophy, theology and even politics" to genetics at every point. And he pretends he has no axe to grind. "Any discipline that sets out to explain the world, even in its own limited terms, comes inevitably into conflict with those whose beliefs are formed by faith rather than by evidence," he says, all mildness, as though faith and evidence were just as good as each other.

Science and religion just inhabit different spheres, he says, like a shark and a tiger. Guess which one's a shark, though? Yup. "The ocean of ignorance that demands supernatural explanation is smaller than it was, but nobody knows when — if ever — it will dry up." There it is: religion's a shark swimming in an ocean of ignorance.



In the Blood, a sophisticated spin-off from the not very well made BBC1 series, is a very ambitious book. Boldly, he opens it by saying it was written on a copy of Hitler's desk and that's appropriate. "Genetics is, at last, like Germany, ready to stop apologizing for its past."

Going a little further, he stakes the claim for the supremacy of genetics. "It is a science closer to moral and religious doctrine than any other", he says. The Old Testament, he argues, "was the first genetics text of all" — meaning it was a pretty crappy one, therefore, full of elementary mistakes. *In the Blood*, on the other hand, is the Newest Testament, the gospel of Jones, completely up to date.

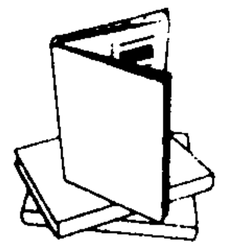
"I have no illusions that this book will alter anyone's views about the meaning of life," he protests. But that's only because he despises the ignorance that allows people to carry on regardless. Actually, *In the Blood* is aimed at doing just that. As the sleeve-note brightly says, "It deals with issues of fate, of life and of death". So there.

Rather brilliantly he begins with Armageddon, no less, when we shall meet our ancestors all gathered for judgement. After a good deal of scoffing at various silly beliefs, he tells us that the genes show that if you go far enough back we all share the same ancestors anyway. He then proceeds to tell us what genetics has to say about such matters as the lost tribes of Israel, racial differences, the meaning of "original sin" (or rather an inherited predisposition to crime) and the prospects of life after death (assured for genes, none whatsoever for individuals).

On each of these subjects, Jones ends up delivering a little homily. Having somewhat shiftily discussed "scientific racism" as "scarcely worth considering", he suddenly damns it by classing it as "a spiritual quest" anyway, and therefore not science's problem.

On the question of whether a predisposition to crime should be taken into account in the justice system, he equally abruptly pronounces *ex cathedra* too. "There can be no universal excuse for bad behaviour... For the law to survive it must ignore the defence of original sin, inherited frailty, in much the same way it ignores poverty, in-born or not."

Steve says so, so it must be true. His own field of expertise, by the way, the thing he knows most about, is snails — in particular the snails to be found in one Derbyshire valley. His biographical sleeve note ends: "On balance, he prefers snails to humans." It's a scientist's idea of a joke. It isn't very funny.



BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ **THE prime minister is taking George Walden's threat to quit the Tory whip over the beef war rather more seriously than the usual Europhile bluster he gets from Hugh Dykes or Peter Temple-Morris.**

Walden, as chairman of last year's Booker prize panel, had to doze fitfully through nearly 200 contemporary novels but was unable to come up with a full shortlist of six. Unsurprisingly, the MP concluded that he could do better himself. After a few weeks' scribbling he found he was right — and announced that he was giving up politics to become a man of letters.

His manuscript, which is doing the rounds of publishers at the moment, has the working title *Little England*. It tells the story of a politician who wakes up one morning to find the country has shrunk. You don't need to be D.J. Taylor to work out that this is a metaphor for the Eurosceptics' small-minded petty nationalism, which Walden so abhors. But in today's crowded fiction market plot and style aren't enough. You need an "angle". What better boast could a blurb-writer hope for than that the author, in one magnificent gesture, brought down the government on a point of principle closely connected to the theme of his book?

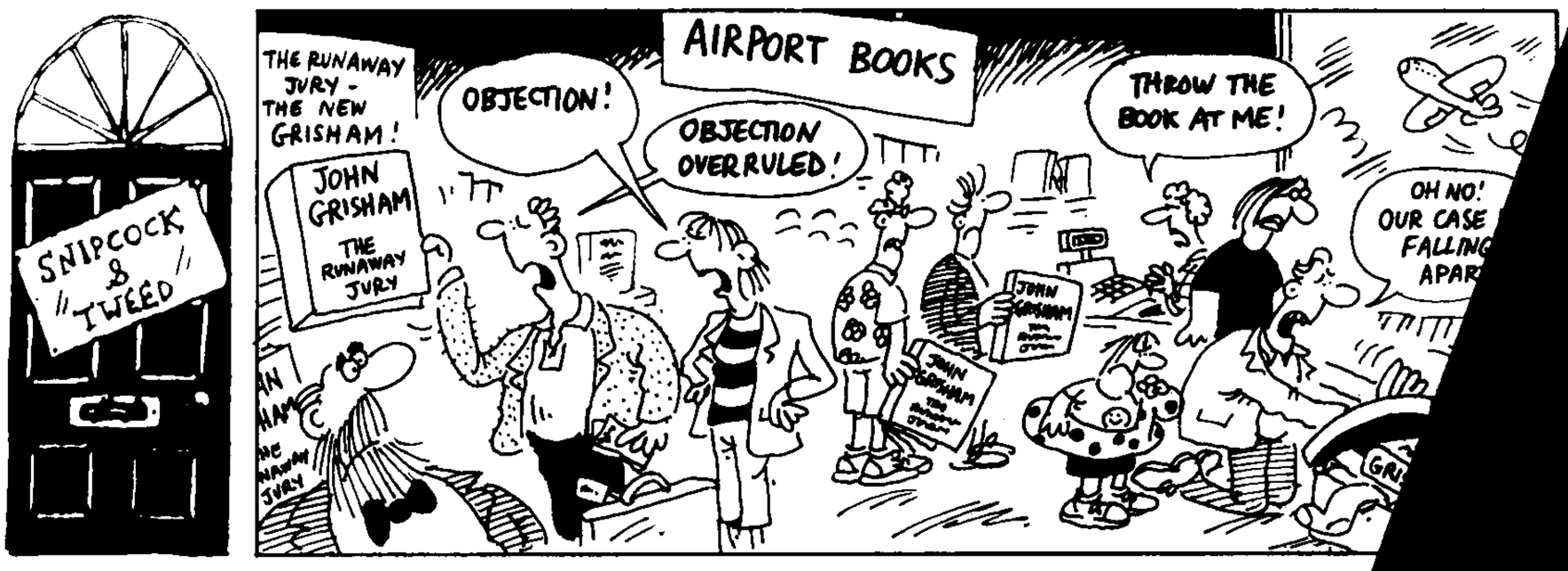
'Bookworm'

REMAINDERS OF THE DAY

THE BOOK: *The Fourth Estate* by Jeffrey Archer (again).

THE HYPE: The story of two extraordinary men which only "the greatest storyteller of our time" (*Mail on Sunday*) could do justice to.

THE PRICE: Published HarperCollins 1996 at £16.99 — but at W.H. Smith, Oxford, was £9.99, now £8.49 and falling.



footnotes

SHIRLEY'S TEMPLARS

A CONFIDENTIAL letter from a former political adviser to Margaret Thatcher to Barry Legg, now the Tory MP for Milton Keynes, exposes another hidden corner of the great pile of dung which is Westminster council.

The letter, leaked recently to the *Eye*, was written by Stephen Sherbourne in May 1989 soon after he left his job as political adviser to prime minister Thatcher and went to a rather better paid post at Lowe Bell Communications, prop: Tim Bell, Thatch's favourite PR man.

Loftus rode

Lowe Bell was then under contract to Westminster to "lobby" the government to reduce the poll tax. Lady Porter, then leader of the council, did not want anyone to know she had hired Tory lobbyists for the job. So she decided to pay Lowe Bell's £30,000 fee "from private sources". Sherbourne's letter raised a further problem. What about a "success fee"? Suppose, he wrote, Lowe Bell got the poll tax down from the £413 it should have been to a diminutive £238. Such a brilliant achievement should be rewarded, Sherbourne suggested, by another £30,000.

Sherbourne's letter referred to previous negotiations about the success fee with Richard Loftus, a millionaire property speculator and heir to the Accurist watches fortune, who was an adviser to Lady Porter. Loftus's property companies have sought council planning permission for a huge property development in the Baker Street area. Loftus is named several times in the recent Magill report as a prime mover in Porter's housing strategy to pack more

marginal wards with more Tory voters, but the Sherbourne letter is the first proof that Loftus was also involved in the campaign to bring down the poll tax. Indeed, so vital was Loftus to negotiations that Sherbourne ends his letter by saying he is copying it to Loftus.

Lowe Bell's demand for a 100 per cent increase didn't go down at all well with Lady Porter, who was as careful with her own money as she was profligate with the rates. She promptly switched the contract to other lobbyists, GJW. After some prodigious "lobbying", the Westminster poll tax was reduced to a tiny £195, less than half what it should have been.

The *Eye* asked Andrew Gifford, chairman of GJW, if his firm had negotiated a success fee for this triumph, and if so, how much and who paid. The reply from Mr Gifford, a former aide to the leader of the Liberal party and a passionate supporter of the freedom of information, was as follows: "I am afraid that we do not comment on our activities with clients."

Hausner 'bout that then?

Another Porter adviser who, like Loftus, seems to have escaped the Westminster crisis without too much adverse publicity is Victor Hausner, a former assistant secretary of commerce to US president Jimmy Carter.

In 1986 Porter hired his firm, Victor Hausner Associates, to do a survey on "gentrification" in Westminster. The Magill report puts Hausner, like Loftus, at the centre of the strategy for "building stable communities" (ie evicting Labour voters from marginal wards and replacing them with Tory ones). Hausner's firm continued as a consultant to the council until 1989, raking in £80,000 of poll tax money in the process. His job prospects were not imperilled. He went on to advise Tom King, secretary of state for Northern Ireland, on small businesses, and was later hired by Michael Heseltine to advise the department of environment on urban renewal.

The Price is right, or is it?

Beleaguered Westminster Tories, meanwhile, have high hopes of revenge against John Magill, the Touche Ross accountant who has exposed their illegal gerrymander. The housing committee commissioned a report on the failure of the council to collect an estimated £10 million worth of service charges from former tenants who had bought their homes. This was just another Porter-style bribe for supposed Tory voters in the area, but the councillors hope to blame it on Magill, who was advising the council at the time. The inquiry was asked to find out if the council could sue Magill for negligence, and the man chosen to conduct the inquiry was Geoff Price, described by the *Mail on Sunday* as an "independent local authority expert".

Somehow the *Mail on Sunday* and Westminster council forgot to point out that Mr Price is himself at the centre of another delicate local council investigation. Coopers & Lybrand, auditor to Redbridge council in east London, has for nearly two years been investigating allegations about inflated pensions for the council's senior staff. The report was expected several weeks ago, but has been mysteriously delayed. Leaks to the press estimate that about half a million pounds has been wrongly paid out. Several former staff have been investigated and their pensions reduced. These include Redbridge's former chief executive, who retired in 1993 with an outstandingly generous pension entitlement. His name? Geoff Price, investigator at Westminster.

GEOFFREY PRICE

Siemens stained

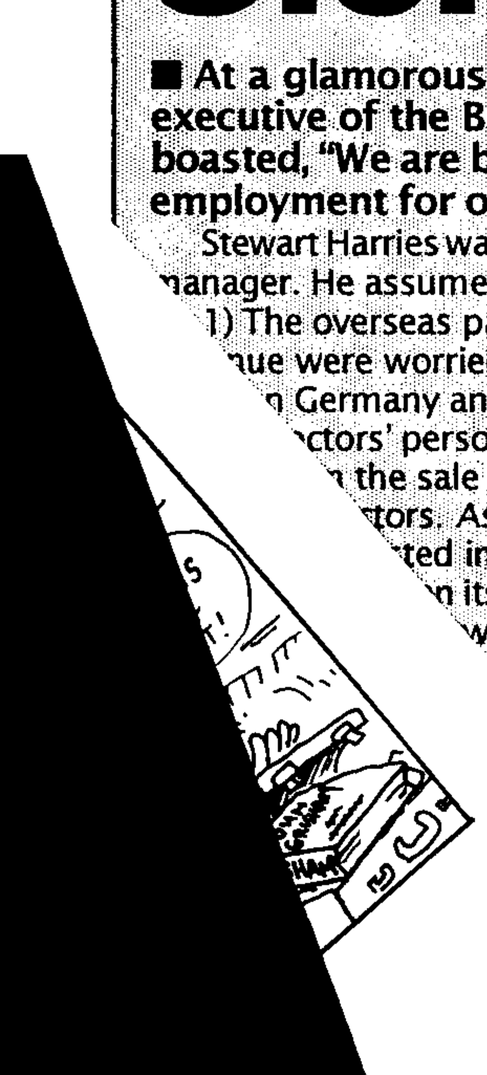
■ At a glamorous press conference in February last year, Juren Gehrels, chief executive of the British arm of the big German engineering company Siemens, boasted, "We are building a company that will, hopefully, provide secure, skilled employment for our workforce for many years to come."

Stewart Harries was not impressed. In 1994, he had been summarily sacked as Siemens's tax manager. He assumed there were two main reasons for the sacking.

1) The overseas payroll scheme. Mr Harries was setting up this scheme because the Inland ...nue were worried about "irregularities" in the tax payments of Siemens workers moving ...n Germany and England. The scheme would have cut out any chance of tax evasion.

...ctors' personal tax affairs. In 1992, Harries submitted to the Inland Revenue tax losses ...n the sale of two houses. He did not disclose that the houses had been sold to two ...tors. As Harries had predicted, the Revenue queried the tax losses. They were ...ted in the sale of Mr Juren Gehrels's house, Quilot Cottage. He'd bought it for ...n its true value — £435,000. This disclosure, and the tax loss of £95,000, led ...ween Mr Gehrels and the accountant.

...sacked Mr Harries took his case to an industrial tribunal, which first heard ... Siemens did not offer any evidence (though it sent along an expensive ...cluded that Mr Harries was unfairly dismissed through no fault of his ...mpensation dragged on for another year until it was finally settled ... settlement, Mr Harries was gagged from talking to the media, ... paragraph in the *Times* (25 April) the story has been successfully



AITKEN CASE: The Lady Vanishes

■ **ROBIN KIRK, an osteopath, is the former principal of Inglewood Health Hydro, Berks, who alleged on Granada's *World in Action* last year that Jonathan Aitken MP once asked him to find female company for an Arab dignitary.**

The allegation led to the heroic speech by Mr Aitken, then a cabinet minister, about the "shining sword of truth and the trusty shield of British fair play"; and to his libel writ against Granada.

Mr Kirk expects to be a crucial witness in the case which has not yet been set down for trial.

One evening recently, however, he let into his home a woman who rang on his entryphone. She told him she was doing research for a possible TV programme about the stress of appearing as witnesses in long trials such as the Maxwell case. When Mr Kirk said he had never appeared in any court, the woman told him he was going to court in the autumn in Aitken's libel case.

Kirk grew suspicious and asked his caller if she was a journalist. She said no, produced a business card and asked a lot of other questions about the case and about Mr Kirk's attitude to it. Twice she asked if he was in touch with other witnesses or knew who they were. He said no. She also questioned him closely on his confidence in the evidence he was going to give.

When she left, Kirk discussed the visit with his girlfriend who was with him for some of the interview. Both thought the whole incident very odd. When they telephoned the number on the business card, it was answered by someone who said she worked in some kitchens, and refused to say whose number it was.

The business card gave the name Touchdown Associates, and an address near Reading. The phone number started with the unusual prefix 07000. The *Eye*'s inquiries reveal that there is no TV company of that name, and the address is a block of six private flats. The phone number is a "personal number" sold by a subsidiary of Vodaphone at £120 each to people who want to use a phone but conceal its whereabouts. The number, when dialled, rings out on any number the subscriber likes to designate. It goes through a central computer and the caller has no idea that the call is being diverted or where it ends up.

The *Eye* tracked down the "Touchdown" number to a subscriber who used a box number at a Berkshire post office. That post office box had in turn been hired, using the address of a farmyard barn. Two years ago the barn had been rented by a man who delivered sofas for World of Leather.

The *Eye* tracked the firm down to The Unique Delivery Co, which operates ex-directory from 31 Garston Crescent, Calcot — a suburb of Reading. Mr Steven McIntyre lives there. His former neighbours at the Berkshire farm thought Mr McIntyre was a former security guard or policeman. Mr Mcintyre denies this.

"I do research," he says, "for firms and for solicitors." He agreed he had sent the woman — whom he named as Sandra Tait — to question Mr Kirk about his potential anxieties as a witness, but he refused to identify who instructed or paid him, saying only that his client was "confidential". On 22 May the *Eye* asked Richard Sykes, Mr Aitken's solicitor, if he or his client had anything to do with Mr McIntyre or the approach to Mr Kirk. So far, no reply.

TWO TORY SIRS: Sir Fred Crawford (left) and friend, Sir Keith Joseph

RIGHT SAID FRED

■ **FOR MORE than a year the government has been hunting for a chairman for its new criminal cases review commission which will investigate alleged miscarriages of justice.**

None of the highly qualified applicants was "one of us", the famous phrase with which Margaret Thatcher described the types she wanted to run the country. Now, at last, "one of us" has got the £88,000-a-year job: he is Sir Frederick Crawford, prominent freemason and Tory, and an expert on plasma physics.

Sir Frederick, 65, is about to retire as vice-chancellor of Aston University, a post which became vacant soon after Mrs Thatcher got to Downing Street in 1979. A substantial shortlist was then drawn up of likely candidates, including Shirley Williams, the former education secretary, and a number of very high-powered academics.

None of these was "one of us", either. The pro-chancellor, Mr Noel Bond-Williams CBE, an industrialist and chairman of the university's "search committee", flew to California, where Dr Frederick Crawford, a former junior lecturer at Aston, was running a small institute at Stanford. A few days later, the search committee came up with a shortlist of one candidate for vice-chancellor: Frederick Crawford.

The senate and council of the university voted to reject the shortlist, but the motion failed (by one vote) to get the necessary two thirds majority. Dr Crawford scraped into office, and almost at once became Sir Frederick. In the early 1980s there were a series of embarrassing demonstrations against Sir Frederick's plans for mass sackings — plans which were loyally carried out by the then secretary of the university, Peter Tebbit, brother of Norman.

In the autumn of 1981 the academic assembly of the university passed a historic vote of no confidence in Sir Frederick for his handling of the redundancies. Unabashed, the vice-chancellor ploughed on. In four years the staff slumped from 527 to 220, and the students from 5,700 to 2,500.

Sir Frederick has never been known to utter a single word about the scandal of the serial miscarriages of justice that occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s. He is plainly exceedingly well qualified to ensure that the new commission stands up for the wrongly-convicted every bit as staunchly as Michael Howard, the home secretary, would expect it to.

THE THINGS THEY SAY

"And no more can I perceive what the coming centuries might bring. But I am hopeful that there will be a textile plant on this site 200 years hence, and that the Kynoch family will still be connected to it".

George Kynoch, Scottish Industry Minister, quoted at his family textile mill at Keith, Scotland on its 200th anniversary. Aberdeen Press and Journal, *23 June 1988. (Fact to Remember: the textile mill, under Mr Kynoch's management, closed two years later, with the loss of 160 Scottish jobs.)*

ANOTHER GRAND PENSIONS QUIZ!

1) Can you name the big firm of consulting actuaries with headquarters in Brook Street, Mayfair, who conducted the recent report for the Securities and Investment Board on "rebate-only" pensions?

Rebate-only pensions were set up when the government (N. Fowler and J. Major) bribed people by paying them a "rebate" if they left the state pension scheme. About five million of the bribed were persuaded to take out new private pension schemes by paying their rebate (bribe) as the only premium. The actuaries' report found that only 250,000 people had been "disadvantaged" by these schemes — a conclusion which delighted the City and surprised many sceptical commentators who believe the calculations are wrong and that the real figure for the people who have lost out on these schemes is closer to 750,000.

2) Can you name the big firm of consulting actuaries with headquarters in Brook Street, Mayfair, who were named by *Money Marketing* (Feb 22) as one of the firms being investigated by the regulator, IMRO, for "systematic failures" in the sale of pensions?

Answers:

1. Alexander Clay and Partners.

2. Alexander Clay and Partners.

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In the City

INFORMATION, as that well known capitalist Lenin remarked, is power. It is also the life blood of insider dealers and the City rings through which they operate.

Its trail is what inspectors from the Department of Timidity & Inaction try to pick up when trying to identify the dealers and their sources. Which is why the DTI inspectors probing the 1994 Anglia TV takeover by MAI have been interested to talk to all those involved in the bid including brokers from MAI adviser Smith New Court.

For reasons best known to the inspectors, doubtless eager to eliminate innocent people from their long-running inquiries, the DTI has interviewed former director Jeremy Tulk-Hart and analyst Mark Davis-Jones. They have also sought advice from Smith New Court's former eminent chairman, Sir Michael Richardson.

That they should speak to all those involved at Smith New Court in preparing the bid for Anglia, perhaps as many as 10 executives, and others not involved is no surprise and implies absolutely no guilt or suspicion. The inspectors' first task is to establish the source of the undoubted "leaks" that powered the Anglia price ever upwards in the weeks before MAI made its agreed offer. And that means establishing who knew what and when — and whom they told.

The DTI interest in Smith New Court is no surprise to *Eye* readers, though suddenly discovered by the *Sunset Times* and the *Independent*. In part at least these recent inquiries would seem to relate to whether anyone at Smith New Court knew any of the figures from the first Anglia investigation (concerning the 50,000 Anglia shares bought by the great story teller Jeffrey Archer for his friend Broosk Saib) or the current probe (concerning the 10,000 shares bought by another Archer friend, stockbroker Karen Morgan Thomas). Intriguingly the answer would seem to be: yes they do.

For starters it seems there is a curious and contradictory tale concerning a telephone call which may or may not have been made to Tulk-Hart's home from Archer's office soon after the bid went down in January 1994. Tulk-Hart was part of the team working on the bid but was not involved until the final stages.

The DTI would seem to believe there is evidence, possibly phone records, that such a call was made although such records (if they exist) only show the date, time and duration of calls — not, crucially, who was calling whom. But Tulk-Hart, who has spent time with the inspectors accompanied by lawyers from Herbert Smith (paid for by Smith New Court as part of his departure package), denies any such call was ever received or that he even knows Archer. So there is one mystery for the inspectors.

They have also learned that elsewhere in Smith New Court, Broosk Saib was not unknown. He was a friend of Davis-Jones, an analyst at the brokers, but one who was not involved in the Anglia bid. No doubt the nature of that relationship has been explored and satisfactorily explained to the inspectors. Davis-Jones, it seems, was also on good terms with Sir Michael.

Away from Smith New Court another focus of interest for the DTI would seem to be an escort agency called the Gallery which was well known to many City figures and other prominent people, including even the occasional Anglia shareholder. It is said any number of tired dealmakers have been revived by the therapeutic services the Gallery provided. Just why the DTI should interest itself in such harmless, social activities is yet one more mystery as bids and deals would hardly be the usual topic of conversation.

What, if any, connection Karen Morgan Thomas has with the Smith New Court inquiries is also unclear. Especially as she has always maintained she bought the Anglia shares after reading a newspaper tip, and Archer has always denied he knew about a bid from MAI because his fragrant Anglia director wife Mary had never breathed a word about it to him.

Indeed the great storyteller tells those who inquire that the current DTI investigation is nothing to do with him. Quite right, too: especially as the great storyteller will no doubt be casting himself for a Major role in the coming election.

Meanwhile the strong indications are that the DTI has found no evidence of insider dealing by any of those whose names have surfaced from the many interviewed. So the Anglia file looks likely to be firmly closed in the near future.

FORMER Tory Party chairman and ex-minister Kenneth Baker has been embarrassed by the collapse of one of his extracurricular business opportunities in double quick time.

New Media Productions, where Baker became a director and shareholder only in February 1995, has gone into administration. Barclays appointed administrative receivers to the multimedia group last December, just four months after providing finance via a debenture. Baker joined after being approached by New Media founder Richard Fletcher because of his expertise in information technology.

IT IS rumoured that disgraced former broker and bankrupt Jonathan Bekhor may have been back in Britain recently from his American home.

The purpose is said to have been as a witness in the trial of Asil Nadir's former top facilitator Elizabeth Forsyth. If so, it was a wasted journey as he was not called to give evidence about the Polly Peck share deals he handled for buyers whose identities were hidden behind a post office box number in Geneva.

Bekhor's next likely return date is scheduled to be September — for the corruption trial of former Inland Revenue inspector Michael Allcock. If he makes that date a number of City and political figures may be somewhat concerned about what he will have to say about the years when A.J. Bekhor was the broker of choice for those who needed discretion for their share dealings to avoid the attention of the stock exchange and/or the Inland Revenue.

THERE'S definitely gold in them thar Canadian hills. Ask Tim Hoare, whose brokerage firm T. Hoare & Co has peddled more Vancouver and, of late, Alberta Stock Exchange mining junk (*"exciting speculative opportunities", shurely? Ed.*) than most.

Hoare's latest winner was Timbuktu Gold which rocketed to Can$30 million in Alberta's Sleepy Hollow on tales of King Solomon's Mine in West Africa until it was revealed that promoter Oliver Reese had twice been caught by the Americans running mining scams, the last time with what looks suspiciously like Timbuktu Mark One.

Sadly Hoare's extensive due diligence probes failed to uncover a word of Reese's previous form before persuading clients to invest C$5.2 million. Timbuktu's listing is now suspended and Reese has been booted out while belated inquiries continue into the stupendous drilling results from Mali that even Hoare suddenly find incredible.

But win or lose they all make money for Tim Hoare and his partners. For the year to February 1995 the company showed a profit of £507,000 after placing £56 million of exotic VSE promotions. And that was after Hoare paid himself a modest £440,000.

Interestingly enough the largest shareholder in T. Hoare is leading VSE player Canaccord Capital, whose boss Peter Brown is a Hoare director. This makes Hoare's failure to spot Reese all the more puzzling. For almost 10 years ago when Reese first discovered King Solomon's Mine in Mali and tried to unload it on the VSE Brown was blamed for blowing the whistle!

'Slicker'

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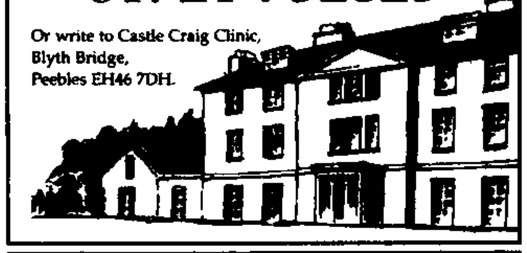

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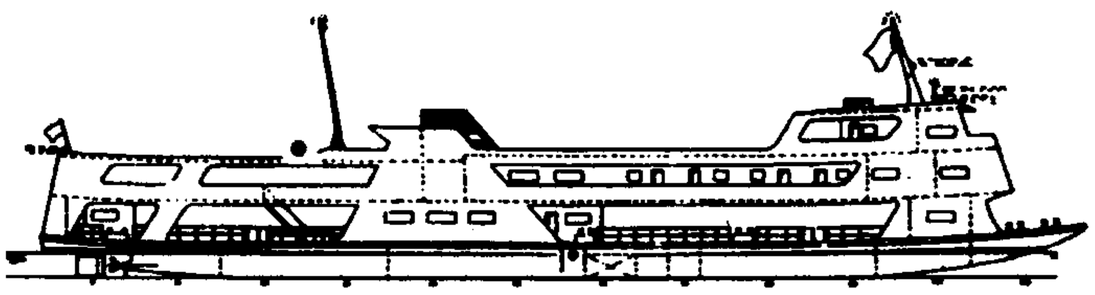

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Guardian

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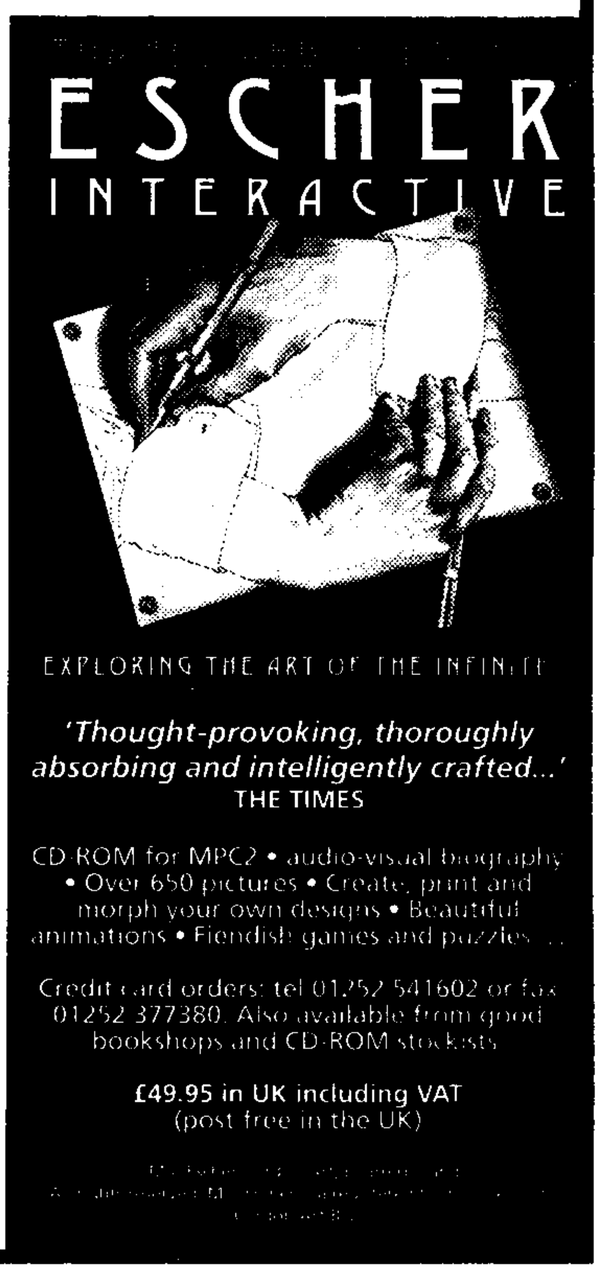
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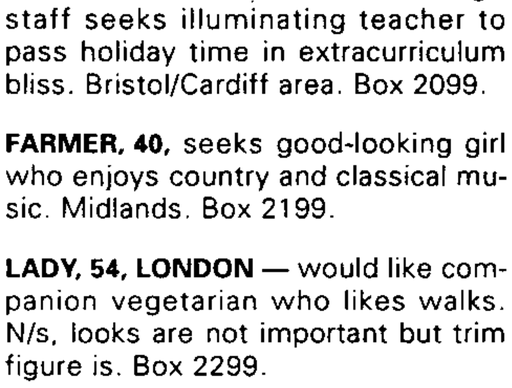

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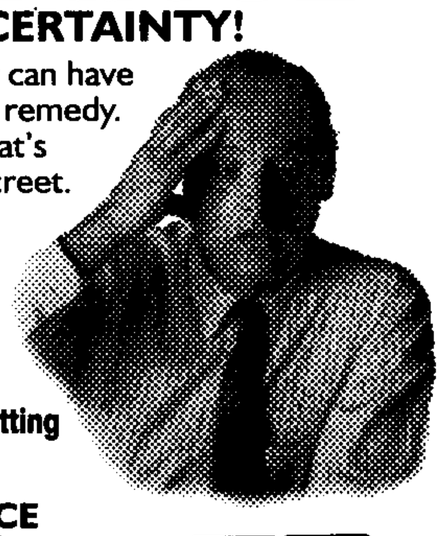

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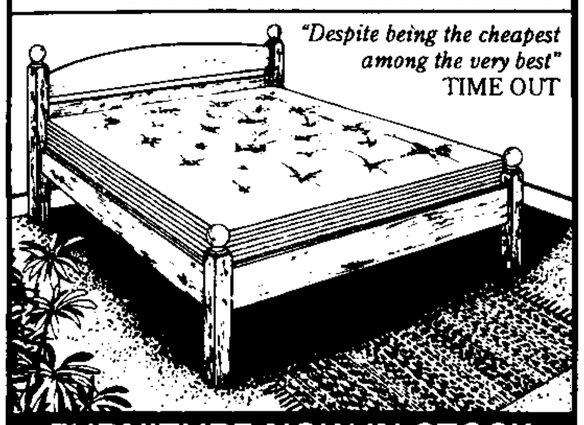

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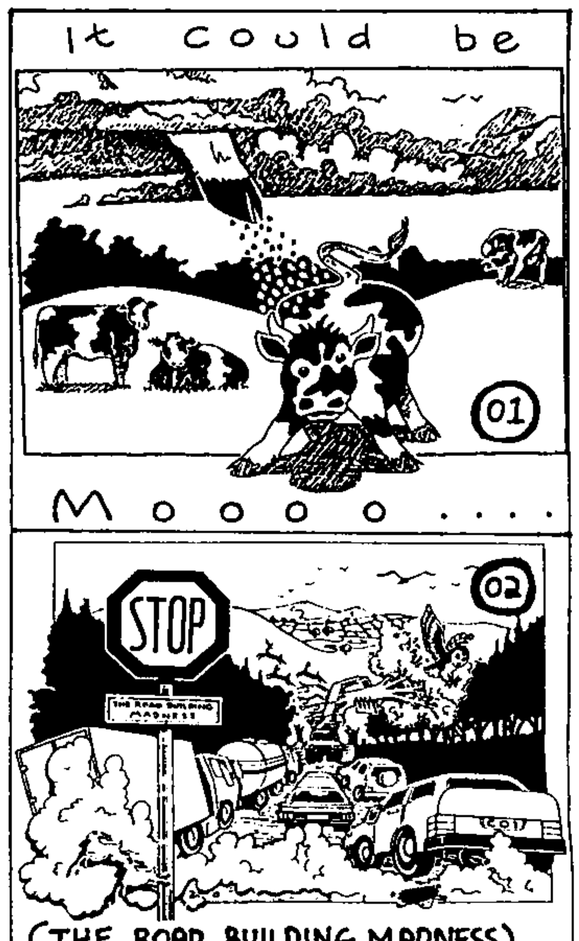

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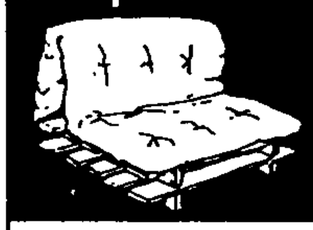

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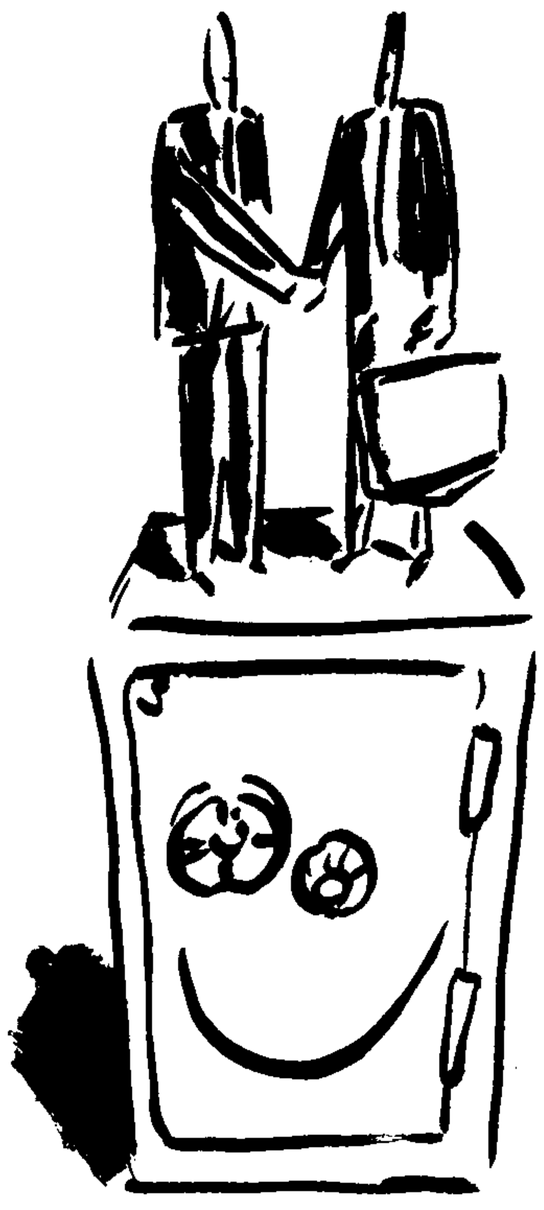

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2. Personal Information

Marital Status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒
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Age: _____ Height: _____
Occupation: _____
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Build: slight ❒ medium ❒ large ❒
Attractiveness:
Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

3. Education

Private / Public ❒ Grammar ❒
Comprehensive ❒
Secondary Modern ❒

O Levels / GCSE's ❒ A levels ❒
Further Education ❒
University / Professional Equivalent ❒
Technical Qualification ❒

4. Your Personality

(tick which traits closely describe you)

❒ Affectionate ❒ Fashionable
❒ Serious ❒ Practical
❒ Considerate ❒ Conventional
❒ Shy ❒ Reliable
❒ Romantic ❒ Adventurous

5. Your Attitudes

(tick for yes, cross for no or leave blank if you don't feel strongly)

❒ Do you prefer town life?
❒ Do you involve yourself with community activities?
❒ Do you have many friends of your own sex?
❒ Are you interested in current affairs?
❒ Are you looking for one special relationship?
❒ Do you like team activities?
❒ Does your work make it difficult to meet new people?
❒ Do you feel resentful when forced to act quickly?
❒ Do you want to extend your social life as well as finding a special relationship?
❒ Do you devote a lot of time to your social life?

6. Your interests

(sections 6. and 7. Please tick for a liking, cross for a dislike or leave blank for no pref.)

❒ Wining/Dining ❒ Jazz/Folk music
❒ Pubs ❒ Classical music
❒ Sports/Keep fit ❒ Theatre/Arts
❒ Entertaining ❒ Watching TV
❒ Reading ❒ Smoking
❒ Travelling ❒ Mixing with friends
❒ Walking ❒ Children
❒ Cinema ❒ D.I.Y. / Crafts
❒ Pets/Animals ❒ Gardening
❒ Pop music ❒ Sightseeing

7. Details of the partner you would like:

Minimum age:_____ Maximum age:_____
Height: min._____ max._____ Don't mind ❒
Marital status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒
Widowed ❒ Separated ❒
Don't mind ❒
Build: slight ❒ medium ❒ large ❒
Attractiveness:
Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

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Please answer the questions above, cut out this page and send it to us at Dateline 23 Abingdon Road, London W8 6AL *or call us now on (01869) 324 100*

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